SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 494. FOR WEEK ENDING JUNE 18TH, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

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SHORT STORIES

No. 494. ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending June 18th, 1898.

- TWO - MIDNIGHT DUELS.

"TO-NIGHT," said Trethowan, leaning back in his chair, "is the twelfth anniversary of the most horrible affair I ever had the misfortune to be drawn into. At any rate, to me it was horrible; doubtless there are men who would go through it without dreaming such awful dreams as I did for months afterwards.

"I was in with rather a wild set during my student days in Paris. Although we worked hard, we lived as fast as our resources would permit. Certainly, there were few luxurious vices in our list of follies. Amongst us was a Bordelais who was studying anatomical drawing under Mallesherbe. He was a quiet fellow, one of the melancholy sort; tall, awkward, thin, with straight black hair, but with the finest grey eyes I have ever seen in a man, and clear-cut lips that, in parting, showed white, perfect teeth. He was far from handsome; altogether a man to excite a smile at first, but afterwards, to compel one's admiration.

"We called him by no other name than 'The Bordelais,' and that term must do now, for, as you will understand, I cannot in honour disclose his identity. He and I became to a certain extent friendly—that is to say, we frequented the same *brasserie*, visited each other occasionally, and, as far as possible, worked together.

"There was one man we met very often—Jules de Cassagnac, a man whom we both detested. He was gentlemanly enough in manner, fascinating, accomplished, but what little I knew of his real life would not bear public scrutiny. In short, he was a type of those polished, educated blackguards who spare neither man nor woman in their search for gain and pleasure.

Edited By Arthur Pearson

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"As I have said, his record was black even for the Rue des Écoles, but he found most of us willing to shelve it for the sake of his agreeable society and sparkling conversation. And he had not that fault that is worse than a crime to the wild students of Paris—meanness. In fact, he was rather too fond of the *rôle* of '*Le Grand Seigneur*,' and spent his money prodigally.

"Of course, having no personal grievance against the man, neither the Bordelais nor I could be other than polite to him. Even Bohemia has its conventions. And so when Paul Deschamps, one of our best friends, gave his farewell dinner, we naturally accepted the invitation, though we knew De Cassagnac would be there also.

"No need to describe a students' dinner party. You know yourself the laughter and noise, the jests, songs, speeches—the boundless gaiety that springs from the free life and animal spirits of Bohemia, when youth colours everything with the rosy tint of its own swiftly flowing blood.

"We sat late into the night amid the mad enjoyment and uproar. Two o'clock had struck from the tower of St. Sulpice. Deschamps was already asleep in his chair, crowned with an enormous paper cap and robed in serviettes by those about him. Toasts were being drunk, faces were growing flushed and hands unsteady. I heard De Cassagnac's deep voice alternating with another's as they discussed their respective skill with the pistol. As for myself, between the champagne, curacoa, and sweet wines, and the bright eyes of the little grisette next me, I was perfectly happy and oblivious to all but the intoxication of the moment.

"Suddenly there was a lull in the laughter and talk; then a dead silence. I looked up in surprise. All eyes were fixed on the Bordelais. He had risen, his face white as the cloth before us, and was standing as one dazed, clutching a wineglass tightly in his hand. He strove to speak, but only a hoarse murmur came from his dry, colourless lips.

"What had happened, I asked myself; and the suddenness of it sobered me at once. I saw his horrified gaze was fixed on De Cassagnac, who sat perfectly self-possessed with a curious, questioning look on his face.

"The Bordelais slowly drew back his hand, as if to hurl the glass across the table. Then the cold, cynical eyes opposite snapped, and the man's teeth set tightly. He was a duellist to the backbone, and the fighting blood rose and dyed his temples faintly as he awaited the insult. A second or two of suspense, and his lips relaxed into a disdainful smile as the Bordelais replaced the glass, and walking heavily to the door, left the room without a word.

"It was useless to try and ascribe any reason for his actions, and De Cassagnac himself could not, or would not, even guess at the motive for such conduct. In a little time the party gradually thinned out, leaving only one or two *bon vivants*, who still held to their bottles. There was no restoring the mirth and carelessness that had been so suddenly checked.

"I walked back slowly to my rooms with a student of the Sorbonne, who had sat next to De Cassagnac during the evening.

"'What was the fellow saying,' I asked, 'that could have caused such an explosion?'

"The student raised his eyebrows.

"'We were speaking, as near as I can remember,' he said, 'of duelling. Ah, yes; he was telling us of an affair he had once fought in the garden of a house outside Bordeaux—in the dark, too. He and his opponent aimed by the mark their lighted cigars afforded. A strange way of fighting! De Cassagnac hit his man in the throat, and prides himself upon the shot. My faith—Bordeaux—they call your friend the Bordelais! Perhaps——'

"But I heard no more. My mind was already building up theories to account for what had passed; I abstractedly bade my companion 'Good-night,' and hurried on.

"The remainder of the night passed sleeplessly for me. The excitement kept me awake, and I lay on my bed wondering what would come of the scene I had just witnessed. The Bordelais was no coward, I knew, and either an apology was necessary or some other steps that would find their climax in swords or pistols. But the next day to my surprise he was not seen at the schools or the cafés. I called on him—he would not unfasten his door. The *concierge*, shaking his white head gravely, informed me that his lodger had come home almost insane, had neither eaten nor drunk all day, but had kept himself locked in his room.

"Those who were of the party the night before summed it all up in three words: 'Drunk or mad,' and dismissed the subject with a shrug of the shoulders. Their dinner had been interrupted, and they had been annoyed; they had been startled, and were not to have the recompensing excitement of a quarrel with its inevitable result, so they felt aggrieved. But as it was all over, and they had slept on it, they dismissed it from their minds. I was by no means sure it was over; I could not think my friend cur enough to hide himself to escape the consequences of his conduct. And I was right, for in the evening, as I turned up the Rue d'Orsel, after leaving one of the *brasseries*, I met him face to face.

"He was hurrying along, and as I stopped him beneath the glare of a lamp, I could see great, dark rims round his eyes and a drawn look on his face, that told of a terrible night and day of suffering. He seemed to have gone utterly to pieces.

"'Come with me,' he said harshly, not replying to my greeting. "If you are my friend you must come with me. I—don't stand still, for Heaven's sake; walk with me—I can't——'

"He paused in his hurried, incoherent speech, and tried to steady himself.

"'Where is De Cassagnac?' he suddenly asked, when we had proceeded some yards.

"'I saw him a little while ago in the Café des Etudiants.'

"We turned in the direction of the place, and as we reached it my companion asked—'ordered' would be the better term with which to describe the abrupt tone and phrase—me to see if the man was still there. Yes, he was there, sitting at a table with Deschamps. When I returned to the Bordelais his excitement increased, and for some moments he stood literally trembling. Then with a powerful effort he controlled himself, and walked into the café.

"He singled out his quarry in a moment, and I thought he would have sprung at his throat, but the glare passed from his eyes; still master of his emotions, he took a seat at the same table, and called for wine.

"Deschamps and I exchanged glances of recognition, but nothing more. The two adversaries (no one could doubt that they were such) eyed each other in silence. In a moment or two the waiter placed before us two glasses and an opened bottle, and when he had withdrawn, my friend slowly filled one glass. Then fixing

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his eye full on De Cassagnac, he, by an awkward movement, upset it, sending a stream of Chambery over the hand of his enemy as it rested on the table.

"De Cassagnac bit his lip. 'Monsieur has had the misfortune to wet my hand with his wine,' he said, with constrained politeness. The Bordelais filled the second glass. De Cassagnac spoke again: 'Monsieur will apologise;' and under the words lay the threat that showed the game they were playing. The other took no notice, but commenced refilling the glass that had been overturned. Now his opponent was before him he had become as cool as ice. Then the man opposite raised his hand and flicked some drops of wine insultingly across the table. Quick as thought came the retaliation—the second glassful right in his face.

"He had on his lips the smile of a demon as he wiped the wine from his eyes, and rose to his feet. 'Deschamps, act for me!' he cried.

"The Bordelais drew me aside. 'Complete my obligations to you, my friend, and arrange this for me. To-night—midnight—and above all things, we fight with pistols and aim by the light of each other's lighted cigars—no other light mind. You will find me at my rooms.'

"It was now nine o'clock, and Deschamps expostulated against the short time for preparation. But events had hurried themselves along so rapidly that I cared for nothing but getting it all over while we were in hot blood. The fight could not be avoided, and my principal, though firm enough to-night, his nerves strung to the utmost tension, would probably break down entirely by the morning. So I carried that point. But on mention of the condition of darkness, Paul Deschamps shook his head resolutely. 'You cannot be in earnest,' he cried. 'Lanterns, torches, if you will, but—*Mon Dieu!* We have a right to refuse.'

"'There is no unfair advantage to either,' I returned. 'It is deadlier than by flickering torchlight, perhaps, but less dangerous than by daylight.'

"'But it is not the custom; it is unheard of.'

"I remembered that Deschamps had been asleep during the scene at the dinner, and, indeed, it was only now that the words of the student of the Sorbonne came to my mind—'they aimed by the mark their lighted cigars afforded.' Some mystery lay behind it all, and I would see if De Cassagnac knew more than he would acknowledge.

"'It is not unheard of,' I said. 'Consult your principal. Tell him his adversary wishes to fight as the duel in the garden of the house outside Bordeaux was fought.'

"With a perplexed frown on his forehead, Deschamps went slowly across to where De Cassagnac stood, and spoke to him. The duellist looked up quickly and stared across at me. His hand trembled slightly as he curled his moustache mechanically, then, hastily nodding, he moved away.

"'It is agreed then,' said his second reluctantly, and we proceeded to the arrangement of some minor points.

* * * * *

"As our boatman rowed us down the Seine, all was dark except that, behind, in the sky, the lights of Paris threw a luminous haze, and far up the river the lamps on the quays faintly twinkled. Ahead we heard the plash of oars also making for the Ile de la Grande Jatte. The wind swept down the river, cutting like a knife. I threw my cloak over the Bordelais, fearing lest, in spite of his heavy paletôt, the cold would render his aim untrue. He did not move, but looked steadfastly into the blackness. The moaning wind and river, the motionless figure by my side, the silent boatman—these, and the darkness before us, in which lay life or death, thrilled me with unspeakable horror. It was like the passing of ghosts into the nether world.

"I could not see the face of the man beside me, but I felt that if I could it would be that of a doomed man.

"Presently the boat grated on the gravel, and we sprang ashore and hastened up the bank. Our opponent was already in his place with his second and another person whom Deschamps introduced as Doctor Fauchet.

"Then the Bordelais broke silence for the first time. 'Monsieur,' he said to De Cassagnac, 'one, perhaps both of us, will never leave this ground alive. I have something to say to you privately, if these gentlemen will permit. You will be perfectly safe, monsieur,' he added, as the other hesitated.

"'Ah, monsieur, I do not fear you,' rejoined De Cassagnac, stung by the taunt, and the two walked aside.

"Deschamps and I paced off the ground by lantern light, and when our principals returned the pistols were chosen and the duellists took their positions silently.

"Two little flames sprang up and died out again, leaving the full red circles that marked the human targets behind them. As the match on my left flamed up, the face of our opponent, I fancied, was pale, and I thought I saw his lips quiver. It may have been that the flickering shadows deceived me. Indeed, I was in no fit state to notice anything; my heart was beating heavily, and a cold shudder was creeping over me.

"No light now but the two glowing circles, growing slightly fainter. Above the dismal rustling of the trees Deschamps' voice rang out, but with a tremor in it—'One! Two! Th——' but ere the last word could be spoken De Cassagnac's pistol cracked, and the gleaming cigar on my right fell to the ground, scattering a small shower of sparks. A quick, indrawn breath told me that the bullet had struck home.

"I sprang forward. Deschamps cried out at the cowardly shot, and then the Bordelais pistol spoke also, and De Cassagnac staggered, went down with a crash, headlong.

"The lantern was hurriedly relit, and while Doctor Fauchet leant over the dead man, my friend put his hand on my arm. 'Take me away,' he said, between his teeth, 'lose no time.'

"'You are wounded?' I cried.

"'No, no; but be quick.'

"And so we left the two men kneeling over the dead one, and in a few minutes were out in midstream.

"When at length we got into the light of the quays, I saw that a handkerchief was wrapped round the Bordelais' left hand, and from it thick sluggish drops of blood were falling. But he persisted in going straight to his rooms, and once there, he fell into a chair fainting.

"My first thought, on his recovery, was to get a doctor for his wounded hand, but he started up in alarm at the mention of it.

"'No, for God's sake, no!' he cried. 'Do you think I want my shame known to all? I have acted to-night as only a cur, a coward, an assassin could act. You—or someone—cried out in reproach when the dead man's shot was fired before its time. You would have left me without a word if, through the darkness, you could have seen my murderous trick—ay, a cunning trick, the vile

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deceit of the gambler playing with marked cards—I am a coward.'

"I stared at him, believing the awful night's trial had turned his brain. Great drops of sweat stood on his brow; he was in agony.

"'Look,' he said, unwrapping the bandage. Without wincing, he tore it off, and picking up a pen from the table, held it between the fingers of the wounded hand, as one might hold a cigar, but at a distance from his body.

"'Do you think I did not know De Cassagnac would attempt to kill me ere I could fire? I knew it when I told him before we fought the real reason for my seeking a quarrel. I feared I should not have time to kill him, and I held the light—so—in my hand. You see his bullet would have been in my throat, but I tricked him. He struck my wrist only, and left me my revenge!'

"He paused; his hand fell to his side powerless with the strain he had put upon it, and the wound began to bleed fast. Refusing all assistance, he spoke again rapidly.

"'And now for what little excuse I have to make. I am disgraced, if not in the sight of Paris, in my own eyes, but I value your good opinion and want you to know my reason for this treachery.

"'When I was a boy I lived with my father, sister and brother, in a house near Bordeaux. Our mother was dead. One night I lay awake and heard a faint cry come from my sister's room, followed by the deep murmur of men's voices. With cautious haste I slipped on my clothes, listening all the time, and then I distinguished, as I crept to the door of the room, that one voice was my brother's. I heard the window open, and presently there came two heavy thuds on the ground beneath as if the men had leapt out.

"'Hearing no cry for help and knowing Felix, my brother, was there, I thought there was no need to raise an alarm, but crept through the house silently, and down into the old garden. I heard them making their way over the fallen leaves and branches rotting on the ground, and then they came to a halt. "I would have shot you on the spot but for the scandal and my sister's name!" my brother cried hotly in reply to something the other had said. "But we cannot fire in the dark," was the objection. The man evidently wished for delay. "Then we will fire by the light of a match—anything—or at arm's length, the pistol muzzles touching each other's breast—you shall not escape me—and the third stroke of the church clock shall be the signal. It is nearly the hour now." "Let us smoke, then, the few minutes we have to live," the stranger responded coolly. And then followed a proposal to fight by the light of their cigars, as we fought to-night. I lay still on the ground, not daring to move, for I feared my brother's anger. Slowly the church clock struck one, the pistols clicked two, and then, as to-night, came one solitary shot. Felix fell, shot in the throat; his murderer fled. My sister entered a convent, never divulging the name of her lover.

"My father's grief killed him, and I was left, a boy of twelve, the only survivor of the ruin the unknown betrayer and assassin had made. Then an aunt took me to live with her, and I adopted her name. Later, I came to Paris. Last night, for the first time since my brother's death, I found the man who had killed him. I could not challenge the murderer before that mad crowd.

"Everyone would have seen some connection between it and De Cassagnac's story, and perhaps the very secret to save which Felix died would have been common property through my enemy's biting tongue. I lost control of myself then; but still De Cassagnac did not know the truth—that I was the brother of his victim—until he could do no harm——'

"The Bordelais' voice was growing weaker; he could scarcely speak above a whisper, and it seemed an effort for him to phrase his words correctly; he spoke slowly and laboriously.

"Still he went on. 'And so, knowing the foul shot he made ten years ago, I could not trust him, and I—I tricked him, as I told you. There—there is my confession; you know my shame. You will keep my secret? And now, go for the doctor, my friend. But first, can you shake me by the hand and say "Goodbye," if we never meet again?'

"We never did meet. When I returned, a lifeless body lay in the chair. He had bled to death."

WALTER ROTHWELL.

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No. 1.—THE MAN WHO THOUGHT HIMSELF IMMORTAL.

THERE was once in the country which lies beyond the Great River a king whose name was Red Arm. He was a man proud of heart and fierce to look upon, so that all the people feared him greatly.

A glance from his eye could dry up the marrow in the bones and the blood in the veins, could shrivel the skin and shrink the sinews.

When he lifted up his voice in anger the trees in the forest trembled, and the beasts cowered in their lairs. His speech was like the sound of many trumpets, and could be heard across mountains and deserts; and no man dared question the power of his might.

All that land acknowledged him for Lord, and by the people on its borders he was called the King of the Terrible Countenance. But his own people called him Red Arm; for his right arm to the elbow was red like crimson from his birth, which the soothsayers declared to be an omen; affirming that, though he would spill men's blood himself, yet would his own blood never be spilt by them, since no weapon that was wielded by man would ever prevail against him.

So King Red Arm grew mightily in power and dominion, increasing in arrogance with each fresh demonstration of the soothsayer's discernment, till he believed himself to be coequal with the gods, and would have men do honour to him as to an immortal.

Now the fear of Red Arm was exceeding great in Utkala, the glorious country, where for 1,700,000 years, while the whole earth was virtuous, the gods loved to dwell.

The fame of his armies was echoed even in the den of the tiger and the home of the snake. It had travelled down the Sacred River; and everywhere, North and South and East and West, men spoke in whispers of the giants and magicians who followed the fortunes of the Red Arm. And the proud king, the Lord of the Terrible Countenance, when this was told him, laughed loud in the pride of his heart, and said: "In all the earth there is none like me—none. 'Tis I and no other who am Lord of the World, and all people shall bow down and do homage before me."

Then, swearing by his head, since he believed in none greater than himself, he said that he would go down to Utkala, and possess himself of the "Land without Sin," seize the temple, slay the priests, carry off the jewels and, in place of the ancient figure of the Great One, set up an image of himself.

Having issued his orders to his officers, Red Arm went to hunt in the woods, and soon started an antelope—a creature of most lovely shape, but of such incredible swiftness that, though he pursued it the whole day, he was unable to capture it.

At last, tired out with the chase, he threw himself from his horse to rest. Then he perceived that he was alone, and in a part of the forest that was quite strange to him.

For a moment he thought of raising his terrible voice to summon his attendants, but at that instant he caught sight of something shimmering amongst the banyans. Grasping his spear he waited, expectant. Something was certainly moving behind the trees. Was it the antelope? No antelope that was mortal, assuredly. Such a flashing of light, such a ripple of sheen, could proceed from no wild denizen of the waste. The *Rakshas*? No, the evil spirits sent forth by Shitan* after the sun went to rest, were dark and dusky; only their eyes glowed like balls of fire through the blackness of the night.

While he was still wondering what it might mean, there emerged from the jungle the most beautiful apparition that his eyes had ever beheld—a woman clad in the lightest of muslins, and loaded with jewels.

Pearls and diamonds glittered in her hair; on her arms she wore bracelets of priceless worth; bell-bangles of gold adorned her ankles, and a girdle of rubies encircled her waist. Her face shone with the peerless beauty of the moon when at the full, and the loveliness of her form and features surpassed all that the heart of man can imagine or conceive.

Moving without noise, save for the music of her anklets, she made straight for the place where Red Arm, too astonished to rise, was still sitting.

"Listen, great King!" said she. "I am Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity. 'Tis I you have been pursuing. Under the form of an antelope I have kept you at full stretch till the shadows have begun to lengthen and the mists to rise. But you have spent your strength for naught. You have succeeded only in wearing out yourself—I have eluded you. And now the night is coming down, and the mighty Red Arm, who through the long day has been the fool of Fortune and the sport of Fate, is left at the mercy of the servants of the Evil One. Who forsake the gods, O King, the gods themselves forsake.

"Who would be equal to the Great Ones must stoop to the level of the least. That is a lesson which princes must learn in the school of kings, and the king who forgets it must learn his lesson at the hands of the gods.

"Behold me, Lakshmi! Am I not good to look upon? Have I lost any part of the divinity which makes me the equal of the Greatest, because erstwhile I appeared to thee in the form of one of the lowest? Learn, proud man, that thou, too, art mortal, though no stroke dealt by human hand hath power to slay thee.

"And think not, O King, that 'tis of thine own will that thou doest this or that; but remember that he who will not serve Nárráyan must serve Shitan. And now, O Son of the Earth! listen, and take heed! I have a message from Devi unto thee; and here, under the *neem* tree, must it be delivered.

"It was Devi who marked thee with the crimson

* The Devil.

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stain; and, by no man, O King! can thy blood be spilt. In yonder grove you will find her shrine. Go hither and pay thy vow. Offer her, without seeking to know what she would ask, the thing which she will demand; so shall Prosperity continue to attend thee in the way." With which words Lakshmi left him, and suddenly he was alone.

Now Red Arm would have followed Lakshmi even to the banks of the dread river which flows through the kingdom of Yama, for Lakshmi was all light and life and youthful beauty; but Devi, with the four arms and serpent tresses; Devi with the necklace of skulls and brimming goblet; Devi, the mad death-fury—he had no fancy to meet her at the lonely shrine in the banyan grove.

There emerged from the jungle the most beautiful apparition his eyes had ever beheld.

Moreover, he liked not the saying of Lakshmi, "Offer her, without seeking to know what she would ask, the thing which she will demand." There was no such pressing hurry about it, surely! The evil spirits would be flitting about now in the gloom of the wood. He would return on the morrow, in the broad daylight, when, if he had luck, he might see the antelope again.

Then looking about him and perceiving no trace of the visit of Lakshmi, it was not long before he persuaded himself that he must have fallen asleep and dreamt a dream.

So, mounting his horse, Red Arm made the best of his way back to the palace. As he rode up to the gates his son Prince Fazool ran to greet him. But the animal started, reared, and bringing his forefeet down heavily on the youth crushed the life out of him before the eyes of his father. At the same moment a peal of laughter that never came from human throat rang out clearly upon the air. For the first time in his life Red Arm trembled.

In the morning he rose up early and went off alone to the shrine in the wood. All day he searched for it without finding it. At last, worn out with searching, he sat down under a tree to rest. By-and-bye a bat flew into the tree and Red Arm called to it. "Bat, I have a vow to pay at the altar of Devi in the grove. I have a sacrifice to offer, but, alas! I am astray, and fear lest the anger of the goddess should visit me through my neglect. Canst thou not assist me?"

But the Bat said:

"And wherefore comest thou not sooner, O Son of an Earthborn Mother? Devi hath taken a sacrifice to herself, and her altar is removed from its place. It is not here thou wilt find her. But I have a message for thee, O King! The gods have fled from Utkala, and the land is open before thee. Rich booty awaits thee and great possessions. There, too, shalt thou find thy son. Go, seek him in the dwelling of the 'Best,' in the bosom of the Blue Mountain. Sword of man cannot hurt thee, and the gods themselves will make terms rather than see the Land of the Peaceful harried by the Lord of the Terrible Countenance."

Then Red Arm, believing the words which the Bat had spoken, went back to his people; and getting together a great army, took ship and sailed down the sacred river to Utkala, which is by the Great Sea.

But Lakshmi, who sped thither swifter than the eagle's flight, had warned the men of the city.

"Watch you," said she, "and when the sweepings of horses is seen on the water, and the litter of elephants is drifted on the shore, fly into the mountains with your goods and your treasure, and leave the gods to deal with the invader of their land."

So, when Red Arm arrived at the city, behold it was empty. Gnashing his teeth as he walked on the beach, he perceived great quantities of litter which had been thrown up by the tide. "Ha!" said he, smiting his forehead, "'tis this treacherous sea has betrayed us. It shall be punished."

Marshalling his army on the shore, he advanced in battle array against the ocean. The waves receded before him. For two miles they continued to recede, and Red Arm to advance. Then of a sudden they rose in their wrath, and surging in upon the proud, presumptuous mortal, swallowed him up—him and all his great army of 1,300,000 men.

But ere Red Arm sank beneath the angry water, he heard above the roar of the waves, the mocking laugh of Devi, and the harsh croak of the Bat.

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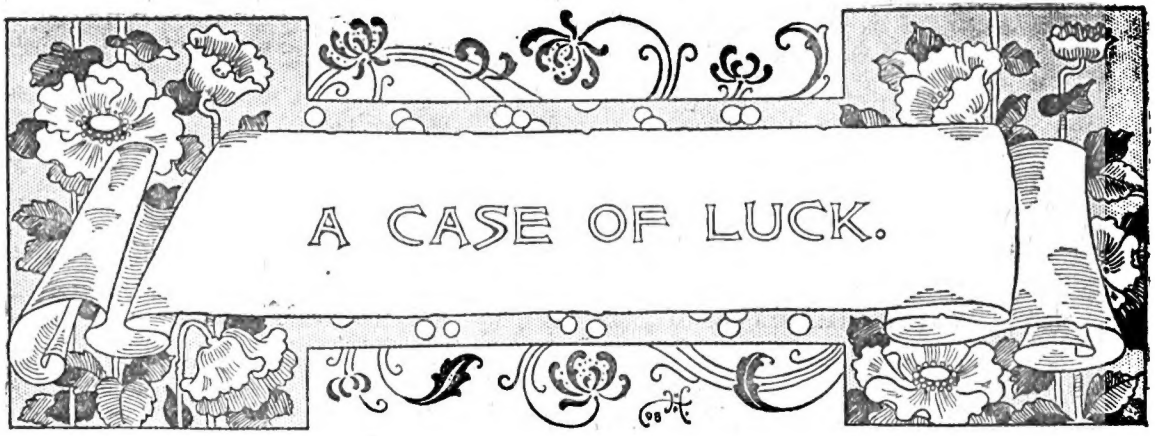

A CASE OF LUCK.

I had, of course, heard of Roland Gay, the detective. Most people had. But I had never come across him. I therefore considered myself fortunate when the waiter whispered to me that the quiet-looking person, dressed like an ordinary gentleman, who shared the coffee-room with me, was none other than the great Gay.

"What is he here for?" I inquired afterwards; for Mr. Gay seemed of a retiring disposition, and soon left me to myself.

"Goodness knows, sir!" returned the waiter.

I ought to have blushed for my innocence. It was not in the least likely that so astute a person would declare his business as openly as people ask for eggs for their breakfast.

Later in the evening, however, I had once more the good fortune to find myself alone with Mr. Gay. We were in the smoking-room of the hotel, he and I.

We had exchanged commonplaces, but nothing more. I felt that I was talking under false pretences.

"By the way," I said, "it strikes me as silly to pretend that I do not know who you are, Mr. Gay. I'm very glad to meet so famous a gentleman."

His smile was good to see. It came and went, however, with remarkable suddenness.

"Oh, well," he replied diffidently, "that's all right. I don't know that I'm altogether so sharp as the papers make me out to be. But I do my best."

"So I should imagine the rogues say whom you run to earth. Your profession must be one of the most exciting that a man can take up."

"Perhaps," he admitted.

"And the most satisfying."

"Far from that."

"Ah! but I am speaking of it in the hands of its leaders—men like yourself. Of course, an unskilful man must often have to groan over failure."

"Yes; but most people are that at first. None more than we, I should suppose."

"No!"

"Fact. Do you remember the Comrie case, fifteen or sixteen years ago?"

"The Comrie case?"

No; I remembered nothing at all about it. Could not even guess whether it was a case of murder or embezzlement.

"Well, then, I'll tell you about it, if you like," said Mr. Gay amiably, as became his name. "I ought to have it at my fingers' ends, for it made me. And yet I was never nearer being baffled than I was by that. Chance, good luck, or what you please to call it, that's the best friend a man in our profession has. He's a bundle of conceit if he thinks differently."

I signified assent to Mr. Gay's words, though, of course, I did not agree wholly with an opinion that robbed him so deliberately of the credit given to him by most people for his talent as a sleuth-hound.

"No, no," he said, shaking his head; "it's luck. The old heathens who made a god or a goddess of Fortune weren't so far out. But I'll tell you about the Comrie case, and you shall judge.

"The facts, briefly, were as follows: A rich old gentleman and his daughter lived in a big house in Lanarkshire. His name was Comrie. In his younger days he had travelled a good deal, and in his travels he had spent a large sum of money on gems, cut stones, and intaglios. His collection was one of the finest in Great Britain. It was valued at many thousands of pounds, and all kept in that country house of his. He took as much pride in the things as a mother in her only child, and wanted to have them near him to finger and handle.

"One morning, when I had been only two years in the force, news came that Mr. Comrie had been found dead in his library, and that a number of the gems were missing. Taylor, Mr. Comrie's valet, was also missing, and so was a woman named Farquharson, who was Miss Comrie's maid. Miss Comrie herself had gone away to some relatives, and had left her maid behind at the Grange, as the place was called.

"It seemed a pretty plain case, you see. Of course, the valet had killed his master and the maid was an accessory before or after the act. They had got off with their plunder, and it was our task to catch them.

"'An easy job for you, Gay,' said the chief, when he put me in charge of it. 'The man's young, and he's bound to be indiscreet, having a woman with him. In less than a week I expect you'll have them. Take my blessing and go.'"

Mr. Gay shook his head.

"That blessing," he continued, "didn't seem to do me much good. Of course, though, I was a bit handicapped by being rather late.

"This Mr. Comrie was in the habit of spending the evening in his library, where he was waited on by no one except Taylor; and he'd go to bed when he pleased at any hour, and not want his valet till he rang his bell at ten or eleven o'clock. You see, too, this

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library was really a private room for himself, and was only approachable through his bedroom, so that the maids weren't likely to be the first to see him. That arrangement was naturally for the protection of his precious stones and things, but I thought it a very bad plan when I came to the house and understood what a start those two had got through it.

"I didn't get down there till nearly two o'clock, and, for anything I could tell, the murder had been committed at eight or nine o'clock the evening before. In fact, that was so; the doctor's evidence confirmed it, and so did the coincidence that no one in the house had seen either Taylor or Farquharson after supper-time.

"It was not their showing up the next morning by nine o'clock, combined with Mr. Comrie's silence, that set the housekeeper first wondering, and then made her suspect something.

"Thus it was twelve o'clock or thereabouts before I could leave Glasgow for the Grange, and, as I said, two o'clock before I reached the house.

"That gave them a good start. An Anchor liner had left that very morning, and there were five passengers who had booked at the last moment, any two of whom, from the description, might have been my birds. Indeed, I was disposed to think they were trying that very tempting but hopeless way of escape. Eventually, though, information from the other side proved that I was wrong on that point.

"Those two had got off wonderfully well. No one for ten miles round had seen two persons even conjecturally answering the description. I could only suppose that they had schemed it out cleverly beforehand, arranged for disguises, and got to Glasgow about daybreak, holding their heads as high as honest folks. My chief agreed with me. I believe he was as disappointed as myself; but, knowing all, he could, he said, excuse my failure.

"It remained to be seen if they would betray themselves by means of their plunder. We were prepared for them on this score. There wasn't a jeweller in the country (I might almost say not a purchaser of that kind of antiques abroad) who was not warned about them.

"However, August came, and still we were quite in the dark. They had done away with Mr. Comrie early in June. You will see that it began to look as though they had got clean away.

"I worried myself almost to death about the affair. It was a terrible disappointment to me, and I had felt foolishly confident at the outset. All the while, though, I expect I was learning some grand lessons. And not the least of them was the need we have of being patient firstly, secondly, and lastly. The man who hasn't acquired a rare stock of that useful virtue won't do much in our business.

"And so, as I said, it was August, and I was about done up with anxiety and running about to no purpose.

"'Look here, Gay,' said the chief to me on the fourth of the month, 'you mustn't break down. You're something of a fisherman, aren't you?'

"I was, and confessed it.

"'Then you'll do me a favour by taking two or three weeks' holiday somewhere, and try some flies a fellow has sent me. I don't think much of them.'

"The dear old chap couldn't have offered me a bait more sure of hooking me. The very next day I was on board the *Clansman*, and trying my hardest to forget the Comrie murder.

"I didn't stop at Oban. I looked at the map and the 'Sportsman's Guide,' and chose the very remotest fishing-place I could. You don't know Barra, I suppose? Few people go there. It's just the southernmost of the outer Hebrides Islands, with two or three lakes chock-full of trout.

"There were only two visitors there—a middle-aged man with a black beard and a good-looking youth. They had been on the island for six weeks, they told me, and they excused themselves for their rather rough manner (so they said) on the plea of this isolation. Now, their manners were really not at all rough. The younger one was quite gentlemanly and pleasant, and the other was not more reserved than half the men one meets in travelling.

"I soon saw, however, that they did not care for my company. They never asked me to fish with them, and ate their meals apart from me. In the evenings, too, when most men chum over their pipes and Scotch, they left me to keep the smoking-room warm. To be sure, the younger one didn't smoke, but it seemed odd that they should avoid the room on his account.

"I hadn't been in Barra four days when I heard these men were going elsewhere. The landlord told me so, and I said I was glad to hear it.

"'They're not my sort,' I said, 'any more than I theirs, if I may judge from their manners.'

"Then the landlord, with a wink, let me into a secret that startled me.

"'Between ourselves, sir,' he whispered, 'one of 'em is a woman. They've got some game on, though I don't know what it is.'

"'Are you certain?' I asked. How my heart beat to be sure!

"'Well, one wears stays, I know that much!'

"That did not seem conclusive. But my professional instinct was now aroused, and, of course, the Comrie case rushed to my mind.

"'It is the unexpected that happens,' I said to myself.

"That afternoon I made up a little plan. If (as it might be) these two were *my* two, then the man's beard was false. I must test it.

"I made up a nice little arrangement of pike hooks set back to back—in all, three pairs of them. With these in my hand, I planned to go past Mr. Brown (as the elder man called himself) as he was sitting in the coffee-room ready for dinner. He was fond of the arm-chair, which facilitated matters. If my pike hooks in his beard did not strip him of his hair, I should be in for an abject apology with a vengeance!

"Ah, but it did, you know—or would know if you remembered the case. I ripped the whole thing off him, and recognised Taylor under Mr. Brown in an instant.

"The rest of the business was soon done. I had them both on board the *Staffa* the next morning. And didn't I get complimented at the head office and elsewhere for what was the purest accident in the world!"

Mr. Gay leant back contentedly.

I thanked him for his story, but did not agree with him that chance deserved all the credit in the Comrie conviction.

"You might have failed to get his beard off; you were not bound to identify them as Mr. Comrie's assassins, and——"

"Oh, but," said Mr. Gay, "when I learnt from the maid that never once had she seen their portmanteaux opened, I put two and two together."

"Which seemed the more to your credit," said I.

ARTHUR STENSON.

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THE CLOWN'S VENGEANCE.

A Tragic Tale of the Sawdust Circle.

That evening there was a great concourse of people on the Place de la Liberté. The Rosati Circus was giving its last performance, and the public of Toulon was flocking in crowds to this farewell representation. At the doors, beneath the flickering gleam of the rows of gas-lights, there was a ceaseless crush and movement; an endless line was slowly winding its way in, halting at every step and hammering the sounding planks with a confused clatter.

All around, on the notice-boards stuck in the ground, the colours of the flaming posters were displayed and, bathed in the garish light, dazzled the eye. In the crowd of spectators and idlers everyone was reading aloud the placard which stood conspicuous in front:

POSITIVELY THE LAST TIME
THIS EVENING.
LAST PERFORMANCES
OF
PRINCE ICARUS
(THE FLYING MAN),
OF
MLLE. RITA
AND OF
ÆSOP
(THE GRASSHOPPER CLOWN).

Within the circus the seats were already overflowing, and the same names repeated from mouth to mouth blended into a general murmur deadened by the canvas roof over the ring. Some of the circus-men were raking the sawdust on the track, and, above the door to the stables, the musicians were languidly tuning their instruments, or, at times, addressing friends who passed beneath the gallery. "That you, Marius? How goes it?" etc. In the upper rows the audience was alive with impatience for the expected spectacle, and irritated by the passing of the young fashionable "first-nighters"—envied frequenters behind the scenes—who pressed in a crowd to the narrow entrance leading to the green-room.

Officers in civilian dress, and students, ship-brokers and idle dandies, all wished for the last time to get near the fair Mlle. Rita, the celebrated equestrienne, who, for a month, had been the subject of conversation in every mess-room and every club. They stepped along, the elbowed and the elbowers, between the walls that were covered with sets of varnished harness, and begged pardon every time they jostled a groom.

They stopped at the stalls of Blue Devil and Djinn, the two trick Arabians, and, under pretext of giving some sugar to the horses, fluttered about the extemporized dressing-room where Rita, tranquil and smiling, was donning her attire. Then came in succession the commonplace compliments, to which the star of the circus, unheeding, scarcely deigned to give an answer, without seeming to note the ardent gaze of her admirers.

She was a handsome girl, a careless gipsy, with the sun in her eyes and her blood, accustomed to the atmosphere of admiration, and she finished her toilet without hurrying. At times however, impatiently, and with a pretty, rebellious movement, she gave her shoulders a shake and made the pearls of her necklace rattle.

It was when the little clown Æsop, her husband, who, all befloured and painted, was walking before the room, his huge top-knot swaying at every step, drew near, and with his sharp falsetto voice launched some taunt at the artist's courtiers. They laughed, they even applauded, but, more often, they lowered their eyes before the cutting, cold gaze of the dwarf, whose wan and grotesque face—in spite of the smile of the blood-red and two large lips—seemed at some moments to be fraught with evil.

This evening the mannikin was in worse humour than usual; his jeers were more biting and more bitter, and beneath the coat of flour covering his seamed features he appeared not pale but livid. His eyes had a sharp and menacing flash in them, and never left Rita, who, gayly posed before her mirror, was having her bodice laced by the handsome gymnast Icarus.

In the circus the orchestra was finishing a waltz by Métra. The curious were gradually quitting the stable and returning to their places. The sharp cuts of the ring-master's whip were cracking in the arena; the show had begun. Icarus placed a last rose in the hair of the

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equestrienne and ran to chalk her shoes. He stumbled against his dwarfish comrade.

The clown seemed very busy in examining the gas-meter, and pushed him away with an oath. Then, without more ado, the acrobat sent him reeling, and leaping on a ladder, cried, with a laugh, "Out of the way, you pitiful pigmy!"

Æsop uttered a roar of rage and anger, then suddenly calming himself, returned to the meter, and after having followed with an eye of hatred the ascent of Icarus, began fumbling with the mechanism of the stop-cocks.

A great clapping of hands. A frantic ovation. Two hundred pretty women dropped their fans, and levelled their opera-glasses, and, a trifle pale, smiled with a delicious dread. Icarus was up there—high up at the top of the circus—hanging to the last trapeze, and turning over and over in it, slowly and without an effort.

At times he paused, and his face was seen radiant in the foolish pride of triumph. Below, in the ring, the clowns were stretching a circular net, and in all the circus reigned deep silence broken only by a feminine whisper:

"How graceful! What a handsome fellow!"

The gymnast then, finding his public sufficiently warmed up, raised himself at one pull, stiffening himself on his wrists.

The trapeze, violently thrown back, described a great arc, and, letting go the bar, the man shot forward like an arrow into space.

There was a feeling of apprehension in the crowd, and an "Oh!" of affright uttered by a thousand throats. The acrobat reached the second trapeze, and calmly let himself swing in its decreasing oscillations.

Slowly he thus darted eleven times, calm and smiling as he made the tour of the circus, and rejoicing at feeling beneath him the immense panting of the throng.

At the eleventh trapeze he paused to prolong this emotion—his glory—and his eyes sought out Rita. The equestrienne saw him, and with the handle of her whip threw him a kiss.

The elated Icarus, hanging by one hand, saluted her; then he brought his trapeze to rest. He was about to complete his task.

"Enough," said some voices.

"No! Bravo! Encore!" cried the ladies, eager to feel once more the perverse joy of an enticing pain.

For the twelfth time the handsome gymnast, stiffening his muscular arms, essayed his terrible flight.

But an appalling cry of terror, a frantic shout arose.

In an instant, suddenly—like a candle put out by the flap of a bat's wing—the thousand glistening lights of the circus were extinguished all together, at the precise and fatal moment when the man was darting into space.

At the same instant there rose from the ring a laugh, terrible, vibrating with hate.

Then in the black and hideous obscurity, in the pitchy darkness that filled the circus lately so blazing, poignant shrieks rolled from row to row. Women fainted, and the spectators, with their hearts crushed in hopeless terror, shudderingly sat as if petrified in their places, and peered into the night that filled the dome. The net was empty, the acrobat must be looked for in the gloom. In the search, lanterns were brought and carried toward the top of the circus. Five minutes—five centuries, elapsed. Someone cried "Bengal lights."

Then, while here and there people were trying to relight the burners, a blaze of violet and red, of green and azure, flashed out and with a powerful illumination lit up at one flash every corner of the circus with its fantastic and trembling gleams.

And suddenly, as in the flames of a transformation scene, was seen, rigid, clamped to the trapeze, Prince Icarus, hanging motionless.

An unheard of horror paralyzed him in a supernatural frenzy. His hair stood erect. His distorted mouth grinned an idiot grin terrible to see, and in his face, whiter than that of a corpse, his haggard eyes, protruding from their sockets, rolled convulsively.

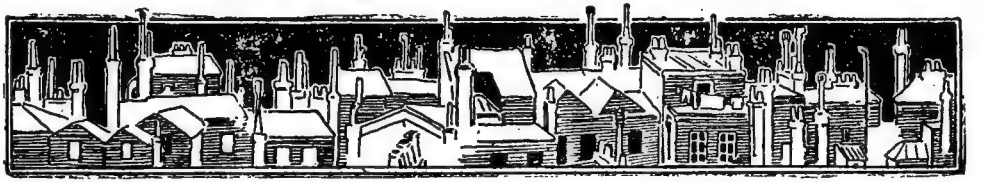
Soon his comrades were near him. With the handle of his knife Æsop struck the gymnast's hands, and with great difficulty detached from the bar the clenched hands of the miserable man.

The gas was relighted, and the crowd, silently and without a breath, watched, as it was slowly lowered down, the descent of the living corpse.

There is to-day near Marseilles, in the Asylum of Saint Pierre, a poor madman, who stalks straight forward, his arms held in front and contracted in an imaginary grip. It is a frightful sight. It is "Prince Icarus."

I do not know what jail holds Æsop. As to the fairy Rita, she is now a princess somewhere in Germany.—

Paul Bonnetain.



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BY M. P. SHIEL.

Author of "The Man-Stealers," "Prince Zaleski," "Shapes in the Fire," "The Rajah's Sapphire," etc.

CHAPTER XXXIII. (*continued*).

THE *Hirosaki*, we have said, was undoubtedly the best engine of war that was ever devised and built. She was armoured with Harveyed nickel steel, and her belt, which extended from stem to stern, was over eight feet in depth, and nine inches thick throughout engine, boiler, and magazine spaces. Now, above this belt, her side to the height of the main deck was covered with 6in. armour for a length of some 250ft., inclosing two barbettes; while at each end of the belt there was a curved bulkhead, fourteen inches thick, between the armoured and main decks; so that a quite complete citadel, 250ft. long, was formed.

Her gun-casemates, moreover, were shielded both on the inner and outer sides, so that their crews worked under a protection almost ideal; while her barbettes, circular in plan, were protected with 14in. armour, rising to a height of 4ft. above the upper deck.

With such a tool of war something might be dared. Nearer she went, ploughing in impressive, squat haste, straight towards the middle of the interminable Japanese line; and while the rest of the British fleet were still beyond effective range, a sudden rain of shot fell from the military-tops of two cruisers upon her decks.

The *Hirosaki* did not answer.

With ripped decks and annihilated boats, on she went, straining her engines, every egress from the stokeholds being closed by the devoted men who toiled like salamanders in her depths.

Within two minutes from the opening of fire, a shell from the 32cm. gun of the *Akitsuschima* (one of the two ships at the point where Hardy aimed to break the enemy's line) had burst through the shield of the fore-barbette, killed or wounded all its crew, and disabled the turn-table.

And now a horror of wonder and consternation spread through the crew of the *Hirosaki*—at her strange silence—at her frenzied adventure.

Where was Hardy? Was he stricken dumb? Was he dead? Was he dancing mad?

An ashen-faced London barrister in one of the eight casemates of the 6in. quick-firers on the main-deck, gasped in a dry-throated whisper:

"He is dead!"

And Brassey, of Kiao-chau, ashen-faced also, gasped in answer:

"Bah! what are you talking about!"

The engines roared, the sea whitened, the *Hirosaki* walked grandly down an arcade of flame and smoke.

She had passed through the first line of the enemy betweeen two cruisers, the *Akitsuschima*, and the *Hasidater* which she could have sunk by a mere snarl of her broadsides. Yet she did not speak.

Before her came two more, the *Ten-rio*, and the *Takao*, and the two before and the two behind concentrated upon her their fires.

Everyone looked to see her sink; certainly, it was only a question of moments—of how many moments the fire continued from such close quarters. The outward appearance of the ship, by the time she reached the second Japanese line abreast, was one of mere ruin and havoc.

The enemy were as astounded at her conduct as her crew. But in a few instants they knew—they thought that they knew.

Twenty or twenty-two cables behind the second Japanese line came a ship of considerable size, alone—that is to say protected by the whole mass of her navy. Yet she was a ship of war.

As soon as the *Hirosaki* emerged from the world of coppery gloom into which she had passed, as it were, a living thing, to come forth, but for her central citadel and propelling mechanism, a dead—she turned her bows upon this ship.

The ship was the *Yoshino*; though powerfully armed, she was one of the ships called "unarmoured"; smoking over a map in her cabin sat Yen How.

Hardy had reached him! One well-directed shell, one happy torpedo, and, beyond doubt, the yellow host will be leaderless. . . .

And now, at last, the *Hirosaki* talks; but she talks in such a sorry, effete, and slip-shod manner, that a whole crowd of Japanese captains who are already hastening to the rescue of that one precious ship, laugh in their conning-towers. Was there ever such miserable aiming? such false sight? Not one of the shots takes effect. The *Yoshino* keeps on her way untouched. The rash *Hirosaki* has run that appalling blockade of flame in vain. And to complete her ignominy, immediately upon her first feeble effort, she turns tail, and goes blundering in defeated flight to the S.E.

She was evidently the flag-ship of the British, and the fact that she had reserved her fire in her passage through the fleet, and had then singled out, and fired upon, the *Yoshino*, proved to the Japanese that the British knew in which ship Yen How was borne, and that their one and only object in fighting now was the destruction of Yen How.

The one and only object of the Japanese must therefore be the protection of that one ship, the *Yoshino*.

It was in order that they might arrive at this very con-

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clusion, that Hardy had made his awful passage through their fleet, had abstained from firing,—and had fired upon the *Yoshino*.

It was his design that the enemy should be, above all things, anxious to protect her. And he used the *Hirosaki* for the adventure, because he knew well that no other ship at his disposal could have continued on her way two seconds through that flaming avenue.

But the on-lookers slandered the *Hirosaki's* crew in supposing them such very sorry gunners. The same mouth which had bid them fire had bid them miss. The *Yoshino* was needed.

"The *morale* of the fighters!" With the most astounding precision Hardy seems to have divined it. How much of his mind the enemy would guess, and exactly where their guessing power would cease, he appears by some divine

Smoking over a map sat Yen How.

instinct to have known infallibly. A European crew, knowing the fame of Hardy, and observing his present fatuity, might have surmised some design, all the more appallingly rough and rude in its results, in proportion to its consummate depth. The Japanese simply read the surface of his mind, and were proud of their reading.

They concluded that his main design was to destroy the person of Yen How—and it was—they were right. But his thoughts were as much beyond their thoughts as the heavens are beyond the earth.

He goes careering to the S.E., and three very swift cruisers that follow in chase he promptly sinks.

Yonder, at the front, the battle has begun, and a sound breaks out like the sound of ten million rocks clattering in rowdy degringolation down a wooden stair reaching from the moon to the earth. And see how, really, that is good for Hardy—native to the very temper of his mother's womb—the sole rough music in the universe which can make his great spirit *dance*! It would be hard now to recognise in him the gloomy, cowering, burdened wight, who, half an hour ago, groaned in the *Hirosaki* conning-tower. His exhilaration is boundless; his face is flushed. If it were possible, joy now would redye the hair which grief had blanched. Here is his element, his day—great *Thurs*day—and he, once more, Saxon Thor, red-handed, swinger of thunder-bolts, tosser of linked lightnings. He feels his arm, his soul, his ordination. He knows that he cannot fail.

He wheels:—the *Hirosaki*, left alone, is steering S.—S.W.—W.—then W. by N. What is left of the European fleet, thirty-five craft, most of them already gravely injured, have now changed places with the Japanese, they being to the east, and the Japanese to the west of them. Both sides put their helms down to reform and change. Only, a solid phalanx of twenty ships remain in guard about the *Yoshino* which is slowly forging ahead in her old direction.

The *Hirosaki* is signalling. The old starboard half of ships are to follow her in single file; the old port are to watch evolutions of the *Hirosaki*, and follow suit on their side.

Immediately the *Hirosaki's* bows turn a little to the south of eastward. Nineteen ships follow her with bows a little to the south of eastward. Sixteen ships follow with bows a little to the north of eastward. At the utmost speed of the craft of lowest power they steam away in these directions.

The yellow men discern that the white are flying. Or is it not rather a mere feint to get at the precious, guarded ship? Yes, that is soon evidently it! for the two files of retreating ships turn south and north, and then in wide curves westward. The Japs are after them.

Between the Europeans are intervals of not more than six cables. The crowd of Japanese come two abreast, the nearest two about a knot astern of the hindermost European. The *Hirosaki* leads the port European limb, the *Hero* the starboard.

The two hindermost Europeans in the two limbs are the Dutch corvette *Van Galen*, and the British-Japanese battleship *Fugi*; these are the only direct combatants, and are using stern-guns. In three minutes the *Van Galen* dives, and the *Fuji* cranks and stops. The British force is reduced to thirty-three.

So far not a single yellow ship has sunk. Five, in the first charge, have been disabled, and the rest only seriously injured by the destruction of unprotected crews. Hitherto they are victors twice and thrice.

They gain upon the retreating squadrons. The average of their speed is greater than that of the Europeans.

Suddenly, after four knots from the start, Hardy turns, and in a short inward curve comes back eastward. The starboard limb, with a short inward curve, follow suite.

And now it becomes quite clear to everyone on his side that whatever is his design, he is accomplishing it at a murderous, a disastrous cost. For as the ships come back, they present a long line of broadside to a still greater length of Japanese broadside—at horribly close quarters; and in the sudden, exclamatory, almost momentary, outrage of hell-fire which bursts from both sides, the ships sink fast. The gentlemen of England acquit themselves well, with precision, with tympana that do not quite burst, with brains that do not quite faint, with hands that do not fail. In that loud squall of wrath they send twenty Japanese and Chinese ships to their grave in the two limbs; and they themselves are nine the less. The Japanese can afford the loss. Not they.

And now, in a minute—so fast do they tear along—the hostile fleets are parted. The enemy, all very near together, go on through the evolutionary curves which the British have described, and come following eastward.

They look now for a rush of the British upon the guarded ships, ready to follow. But no rush comes. The British keep on their way almost directly east.

A rush will come. But Hardy intends it to come when the Japs are in a position to intercept and cut him off. His thought, his patience, is far beyond their divination.

On he goes, leading them grandly through the mazes of that tragic, coiling minuet; and they follow, hasting gladly after him, triumphant, blind, fated.

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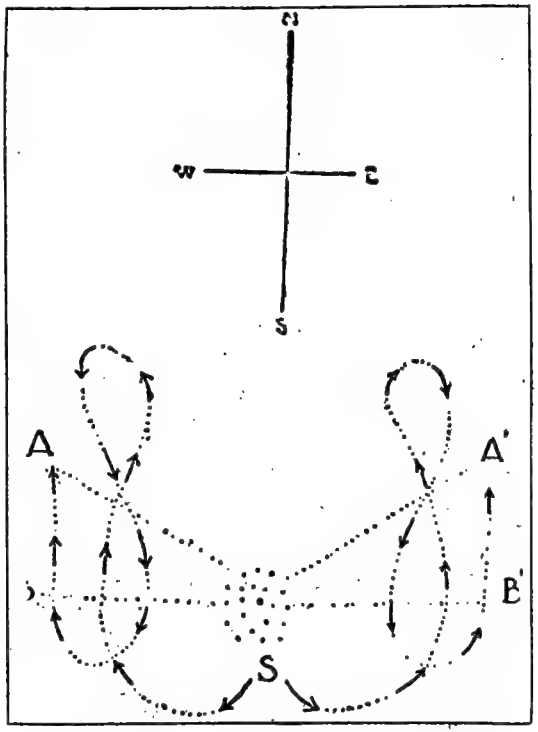
The Pied Piper and his retinue . . . !

His ships sink one by one. He is aware of it with guilty disquiet. Will enough be left for his purpose? The falling out of each one by the way-side is to him like the taste of the second death.

The Japanese follow, not gaining ground this time, purposely keeping their distance, even increasing it, waiting for the next curve to westward, and the disastrous swift broadside.

And round again goes Hardy, wheeling outward, this time in a broader curve; and outward wheels his northern limb.



[The arrows in the diagram will show the course which Hardy took, S being the region of his start, and the dots in the central part representing the twenty ships round Yen How.]

And once again clatters the sudden, exclamatory outrage of fire, bursting from both sides, and Hardy comes out of it leaving behind him four, and the Japanese seven ships.

But the numerical strength of Hardy's remaining ships by no means represents his real strength. He is far weaker than he seems. Twenty-two floating craft are still visible to his eye, but craft so broken and undone, that he knows them incapable of further serious combat. Nearly ninety Japanese are as good for fight as ever.

Once more he is running westward, and the enemy, conscious now of victory, follow.

Westward—till his two foremost ships reach the positions marked A and A' in the diagram: and then hard to starboard goes his helm. He goes driving sharp and straight with straining engines for the packed group of ships round the *Yoshino*.

This, then, is "the rush"! But the Japanese ships, their foremost being at the position marked B and B', are nearer to the *Yoshino* than the British—are in the exact position, in which Hardy, at the price of so much, has led them by the nose in long twining dance in order to place them.

What they will now do, he knows with certainty: they will cut him off. And, in fact, they turn sharply inward towards the precious, guarded ship, in order to intercept, and with one unanimous battery of their entire navy finish at once his small remainders.

And thus it has suddenly happened that the whole yellow fleet is packed into a mere bundle of ships whose crews can speak to each other, some of whose steersmen need be cautious to avoid collision.

And when Hardy sees them so,—herded together by his harsh and baleful forethought,—like sheep driven into the penfold,—he knows that the yellow wave is dammed, and the greatest of his works is accomplished.

He could shriek aloud with cruel glee.

Abroad roams his eye over the sea at his sinking and battered fleet. And as he looks, he sees the foundering of the *Nile*.

And swift, with concentrated fury, the massed Japanese open fire upon his feeble residue.

At that moment the two limbs of the British are not more than five hundred yards from the front of the enemy.

And at that moment it is that an appalling, horrid, unparalleled thing is happening to the Japanese.

Hardy has signalled to his ships to launch among the crowding enemy every possible torpedo in his fleet.

His prohibition to use torpedoes in the combat had led his captains to expect some such final order. They were well ready.

The torpedo was, of course, the most deadly of the then instruments of war. If it exploded beneath a ship, *without fail* it destroyed her. But precisely the most deadly was also, in general, the most unreliable, of weapons. In general it might be counted upon to explode not beneath an enemy's ship, but beneath a friend's, or, more likely still, beneath nothing at all. No serious tactician depended upon it.

In other words, it was not a good engine of aim at a given target, for it usually missed the target. Its course was more or less deflected by the waves—many things happened to it.

It was left to the eye of Hardy to perceive that its proper function was not one of aim at all toward a particular target, but one of loose direction toward a general mass. Under such conditions, it might be counted upon to annihilate in an instant all the assembled navies of the earth.

Prompt upon his order, the rest of his fleet, shattered as they were, were able to launch a ripping navy of nine more torpedoes than there were crowding Japanese and Chinese ships. The *Hirosaki* sent five: one from a bow-tube above the water-line, four submerged. All the other ships were ships with a varying number of tubes.

Three exploded in mutual collision before they reached the hostile fleet.

The rest arrived.

Men clapped and squeezed their hands upon their ears in expectant horror. The sea began to start, and rush, and quake. A swift series of venomous, behemoth bangs—*quickening into ever madder swiftness*—and rattling at last into a continuous thundering roar that seemed to proceed from the very throat of Jehovah—split the universal air, and burst the hearing of all about that sea.

It was heard in London; it was heard in Paris.

The British ships, shocked at each swift-recurrent detonation, jerked and started in convulsive throes, like dying fowl, upon the spasmic, kicking water—started, and leapt, and dived, and sank. And as though in response to some vast upheaval of nature, down upon the sea swept at once a passion of wind, and a furious rain, and a black and utter gloom.

Far over the ocean the floating millions of yellow men heard the staccato of that dread tumult. And many a one imitated and repeated the sound with his lips.

Pop, pop, pop, they went; and pop, pop, pop, they went,

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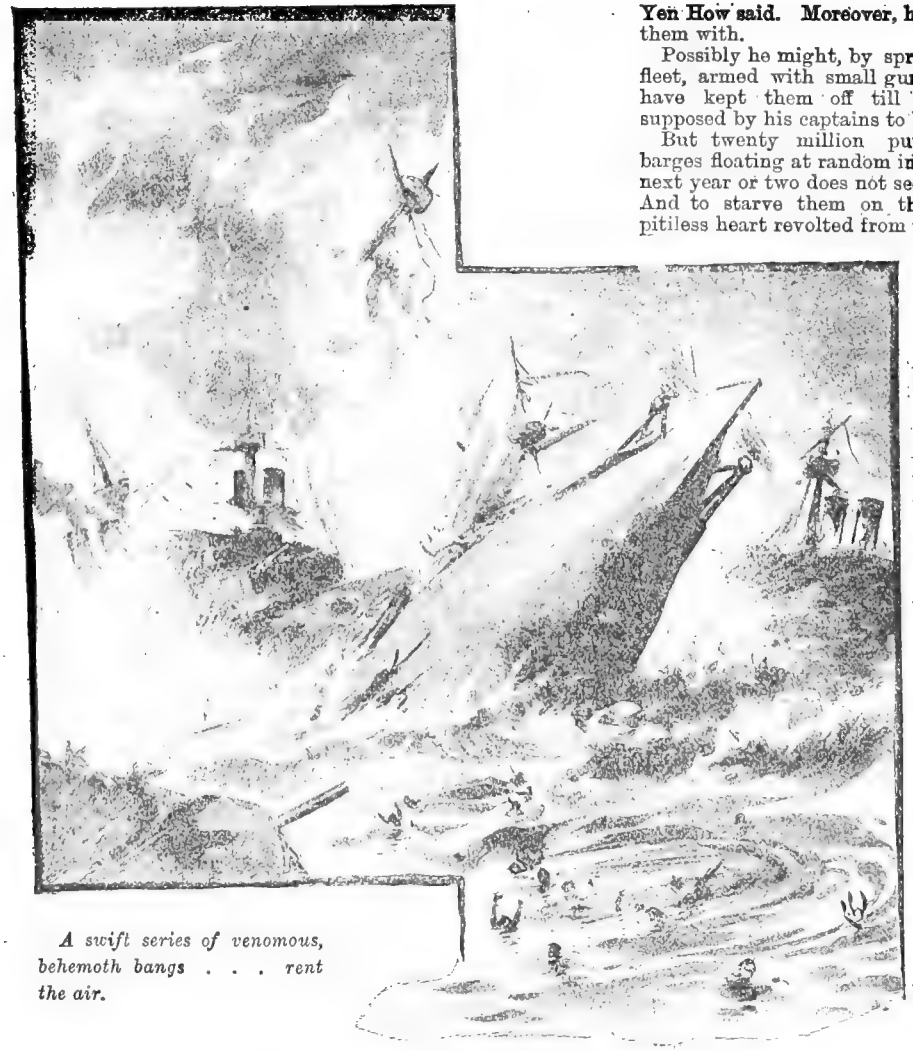

A swift series of venomous, behemoth bangs . . . rent the air.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

The "Crime" of Hardy.

It is not our business here to defend what has been called by leisured persons sitting secure in their studies the "crime" of Hardy.

Napoleon, taking the "Laws of Heaven" into his own hands, poisoned at Acre a goodly number of his sick soldiers to save them from the hands of a cruel enemy. This, too, raised a cry, and was called "crime."

Another of that *genus* took upon Himself to break the old Sabbath, and this raised a cry; but He did not mind.

Personally, we believe that the Great Man has, naturally and properly, these powers; that what He does is right; that the King can do no wrong.

Having cleared the sea of hostile warships in that world-tragedy in the Channel, Hardy found himself confronted with the problem of an army which was approaching a long line of English coast—not far off—an army which was not so much an army as a locust host.

What was he to do with them?

He could not set about and shoot them, for that, supposing he had had a large fleet, would have taken him a year, as Yen How said. Moreover, he had next to nothing to shoot them with.

Possibly he might, by spreading out his vast merchant fleet, armed with small guns, along the south-east coast, have kept them off till they starved; and this was supposed by his captains to be the course he would adopt.

But twenty million putrifying, derelict Chinese in barges floating at random in the Channel tide-way for the next year or two does not seem to have been after his mind. And to starve them on the open sea . . . even his pitiless heart revolted from that.

Or, they might have been driven back to France; or, seeing that they could not land on England, they might have returned to France on their own initiative. But Hardy did not wish them to return to France, thinking that there were already there a sufficient number of millions to engage the energies of his country for many a long day to come.

And so it happened that with the next morning's light—for at last something resembling a sun was seen, in spite of a furious gale of wind now blowing from the north-west—a strange, new spectacle, somewhere rather south of the latitude of Harwich, was seen—an immense multitude of ships covering the entire circle of sea, crawling painfully northward, each one trailing behind her a long line of barges crowded with men.

Hardy had the twenty millions in tow.

Not one had landed. To this diversion from their purpose, they had made practically no resistance. If a Chinaman fired at the tug which came to secure his barge, the barge was promptly sunk by way of stern example. Most were unarmed with fire-arms.

For many hours during the afternoon and night of the battle they toiled by the aid of search-lights, the ships having rendezvous at the N. Foreland, where, at about midnight, they congregated.

And now began the long, toilsome voyage northward.

What made the sufferings of both whites and Chinese worse, was the fact that, from the first bleak sunrise to the last, a heavy wet sea was running in the direction of the gale, and the burdened and labouring ships continually drenched their length in spray shipped over the dipping bows. A monotonous, light rain fell from the dark-grey and hurrying sky; and far over the heaving, stale sea-water rolled down stretches of foaming sea-spue, as though the sea, sea-sick of itself, spumed the vomit of its bitter old unrest adown its own weary bosom. Through the cordage sang in many tones the gale; and salt was in the weird sagas that it sang, and salt was on the flowing decks, and salt in the wet sea, and the world was made of brine.

Ever and again, a ship staggered through every timber, and stopped, tugged from behind by a backward swing of her ponderous following. Then on, crawling, again.

Here the tail led the dog.

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Ever and again, pop would go a stout hawser, and away would go drifting to the S.E. the lessening scream of a bargeload of Chinamen.

Northward, northward, in vast funereal procession. And far yonder in the van of all—the *Hirosaki*, shattered-looking, butting bulkily at the billows, as one who has seen worse things—and come through them. In her cabin, which is crowded with wounded men, sits Hardy; and near him, in long colloquy, a man named Henrick Björnson, a Norwegian sea-captain, who can shout broken English. What Hardy's deaf ears cannot make out, the man writes.

Northward crawls the unspeakable procession. It crosses the latitude of Hull, of Edinburgh; it approaches the Norway coast; it is at Bergen, at Christiansund. Always it crawls northward, and the *Hirosaki*, like the Pied Piper, leads. . . .

On the Tuesday foreday, the *Hirosaki*, in latitude 67° 48", slackened speed, and, while the dawning was still grey and ineffably bleak, the stragglers of the fleet came in.

Hardy had reached the grave-side now—the side of the one grave which Europe offered him for the burial of his dead.

Here and now a very great stress and sound of stormy winds were abroad, struggling for the held-on hat, blowing long ribbons of rope, and rolling before it billows of the sea.

The *Hirosaki* trumpeted a semi-circular formation, and this for about an hour, from ship to ship, went trumpeted till it reached the outermost rings of ships ten miles away. And in another hour and a half the vastest curve of ships, stretching north-east and south-west, that had ever been seen by an eye—the horns looking like tiny toys to the centre, and invisible to each other—lay assembled, slowly steaming, or sailing close-hauled.

The morning lightened, but with ever a slow, and drear, and raw melancholy. It was the morning of an execution.

John Hardy, with the brim of an oil-skin hat about his ears, in oil-skins to his feet, stood clinging to a taffrail aft, facing the strong blast that loaded his breast with spasms of violence, and struggled for the ends of his flapping and quarrelling skirts. And near him, in oil-skins, stood a tall, broad-bearded man, the sea-captain Björnson.

Björnson touched him.

Hardy said:

"Well?"

Björnson took out his watch, held it before Hardy's eyes, put his mouth to Hardy's ears, and shouted:

"*It is time!*"

Hardy said:

"All right."

Already in the look of the water around, there was something horribly *outré*. It seemed as if the sea were getting calm—too calm for the wind that blew. It acquired a certain pallid oiliness in its heave.

Hardy called his trumpeter; he said:

"Tell the captain of the *Umbria* that I want a hundred and fifty Chinamen taken on board his ship—at once."

And down the wind went this command to the neighbouring ship.

And in ten minutes this other:

"Ships to cast off barges, and follow flag-ship in same formation, west by south."

At once the *Hirosaki* put her bow in this direction. The other ships, as their hawsers astern tightened on their new course, slipped them. A thousand hawsers slapped the sea.

The ships moved on. The barges remained.

But not stationary. They, too, moved—slowly—glidingly—right in the teeth of the wind—northward—all of them, over many a mile.

The barges fell into long strings, and patches, and colonies, like trailing sea-weed, always, as they glided, retaining their fixed relative positions.

The men in the barges saw surely that they moved. But what moved them? The crude early-morning blast blew upon their woeful, sallow faces.

Their rate of motion, from moment to moment, quickened. . .

There was something now detestably baleful in the aspect of the water. The great waves had died to a glassy, heaving smoothness. Only, here and there in irregular patches over the surface broke out stretches of vapid foam, or ghastly bubbles. And the ocean went gadding, gadding northward.

This is the First Mood of the Maelstrom.

Then a wonder happened. A string of barges shot suddenly askew, and went wildly hasting in a long curve to the east; and another string shot askew in a western

"It is time!"

curve; and in not more than a minute a hundred thousand barges were spasmodically ranging in curves of every shape and direction over the sea, flying a while—then slowly stopping—then flying off in new curves again.

Suddenly, all this motion ceased. The sea settled into a lake-like stillness, except for patches of bursting, simmering bubbles on its face.

But with the suddenness of the thunder-clap came a change. The surface rapidly assumed a morose hue of the deepest blue, a blue which was liker black. And at once it began to heave itself up into waves, mountain-high, which danced like the Merrymen in a swinging, oscillatory, up-and-down jig, as if buoyed up by some great submarine power which dandled, and tossed, and danced them. And down the steep sides of these cones of water poured the barges of the clinging, staring, screaming men.

But now again, suddenly, the mood is changed—and a voice goes forth over the waters, a doleful sound of the sea. The high, dancing waves die down, and immediately an awful wide change is taking place—a rapid, intense reorganisation of the whole sea-surface—a breathless hurry and scurry of preparation for some unspeakable drama of the deep. There are tracts of black and choppy sea tumbling in roaring haste one way, and tracts tumbling another, as if flying across to take sides in some impending agony. And all at once the whole is over; and every wave,

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and eddy, and barge, and flake of froth, slips into the sweep of one mighty, bawling, racing whirlpool.

Within the writhing uppermost ridge of this vast circumference, invisible under a fierce white wrath of shrieking spray, fly with a thousand wings the barges of the yellow men, fly on even keel, fly uplifted, half in air, spurned from the polished ebony of the dizzy hollow-cone of water. And as they fly, the storm smothers their gasping breaths, and lifts their hair. And as their speed intensifies to the droning sleep of the spinning-top, their queues stiffen and rise horizontal like darting serpents; and twenty million straight and fluttering pig-tails, keeping ever their distances, race in narrowing whorls towards a bottomless, staggering well, that yawns, six furlongs broad, within the central space.

Six miles away, his glasses at his eyes, stands John Hardy, musing. . . . .

* * * * *

Opposite Christiansund, the *Hirosaki* and the *Umbria* were very near together; and here a change of crew took place; the entire crew of the *Umbria* transhipping into the *Hirosaki*, and one hundred and thirty of the *Hirosaki's* crew going over into the *Umbria*.

These hundred and thirty consisted exclusively of the "Hundred-and-Eighty" men of Kiao-chau fame.

It was a mysterious proceeding, incomprehensible to *Umbria* men, but readily comprehensible to some of the "Hundred and Eighty." These had sworn an oath.

On board the *Umbria* were a hundred and fifty Chinese.

Murray (he of the Diary) took over with him to the *Umbria* a small packet which he had received from Hardy's hand—which Hardy, in his turn, had received from a Dr. Fletcher of Harley Street.

The packet contained some hypodermic syringes, and three vials, containing a thick, dark-grey liquid. . . . .

The *Hirosaki* then continued on her southward way; but the *Umbria* put in at Christiansund.

There, on the strand near the town, shortly before morning, they landed two of the hundred and fifty Chinamen. In the right fore-arm of each of these two men was a tiny needle-prick; and as they went walking toward the town, an ink-black spot appeared on their cheek, and a black froth ridged their lips. . .

The *Umbria* then continued her voyage, which lasted two weeks. She stopped at Copenhagen, at Königsberg, at Stockholm, at Petersburg. And wherever she stopped, she landed two Chinamen with black spots on their cheeks, and a black froth at their lips. . .

She continued her voyage. She stopped at Amsterdam, at Boulogne, at Bordeaux, at Genoa, at Constantinople, at Odessa, at seventy-five European ports. At each she left two Chinamen with needle-pricks in their fore-arms. . . .

* * * * *

"Well, well, Brassey," said Hardy in the *Hirosaki* cabin, his arm flung spasmodically round the neck of Brassey, who had remained with him, "well, well, boy. I was once—I was once—different to this——"

His arm dropped heavily. Then, suddenly, he pushed Brassey violently on the breast.

"Go away—go away, sir," he cried.

And in an instant his arm dropped heavily again, his chin on his breast.

He was no longer sane. His hand was thicker than itself in brother's blood. His final hour of darkness and tragedy was hasting to meet his life. All his sky was an ink of clouds. Now again he tarried cowering in Gethsemane.

He no longer slept. Now he roamed the cabin like a wild man; now he sat still and languid, his head on his hands, his eyes having in them the senility of old people's. Every five minutes he bent double in paroxysms of moist coughing. Always the sailor, Brassey, was by him.

The *Hirosaki* arrived at Dover on the Friday evening at seven. A red brand of fever was then on Hardy's brow.

He was taken through the crowd in a close carriage to the Lord Warden Hotel. The news was flashed abroad that he had arrived, and all the bells of England gladly lilted and welcomed his coming. Hardy could not hear them.

For him was neither joy nor sleep. Doctors were summoned, but Hardy would not see them.

He threw himself on a bed; but rose again and paced the chamber in shirt, and trousers, and socks, to a late hour.

At eleven there was a ring. Brassey, who was in an anteroom, received a card at the door from a servant, but said that there was to be no admittance of any sort that night.

Hardy appeared suddenly at the inner door of the anteroom; he said:

"What is it?"

Brassey handed him the card, and Hardy looked at it.

"Ha! ha! ha!" he laughed at once. "My friend Edrapol! Ha! ha! ha! Edrapol, my old friend!"

He had wholly forgotten Edrapol.

* * * * *

Behind the ruins of St. Mary's Church, north-east of the town, at two in the morning—they fought.

Here the strong, prone will of Hardy had asserted itself. He had insisted, and could not be withstood by Brassey. Edrapol's second was a sailor-boy from the *Hirosaki*, Hardy's was Brassey; and the weapons used were *Hirosaki* swords of Japanese design.

A full moon shone. Yonder on the foot-path leading from the East Cliffs waits a carriage, which has been coach-manned by Brassey.

It is a barbarous duel. There is no doctor there. Positively only four men are in the secret.

They take places, sword in hand, stripped to their shirts. The seconds take their places, too. There are two *Admiral Colomb* ship-lanterns.

This is a duel without venom on either side. In one mind there is the mere prone desperation of an hour of tragic gloom; in the other a mere coxcombish pleasure at finding once more a sword in his hand, and an antagonist before him.

Only two hearts throb as though they must burst the imprisoning bosom—the hearts of the seconds. The hearts of the principals are cool, though Hardy's body burns with fever.

The moment comes. Hardy coughs; Edrapol waits. Then the swords lift and cross.

And now ensues a three-minutes' contest between the most exquisite conceivable science on the one side, and the shrewdest, quickest wit on the other.

Briskly ply the complex, gleaming steels, with feint and thrust and parry, in tierce and quarte and staccato, stab and hew—to the infinite surprise of Edrapol, who finds here a man that can fight, and is glad.

He braces himself to the matter, Edrapol. He rises *à la hauteur* of his antagonist. But rise as he may, the fame of great Edrapol is henceforth stained, and his sleeve, —with a thin trickle of blood.

He flushes somewhat, Edrapol. It is necessary, then, to *couper court?* He rises to a still greater height. Among the long white hairs of the famous man plays the night-wind.

Then there is the sudden "Ah——," and the limp failure, and the strong contrast of red on white, and the sword clattering to the ground. The steel of Edrapol is in Hardy's bosom.

* * * * *

The next morning Britain learnt with woe and terror that he was wounded. He lay at the Lord Warden Hotel, and was unconscious, but, as to the wound, it was not dangerous. So ran the bulletins.

But by the next night, he was tossing in acute hyperpyrexia, and was delirious. Miss Bosey Jay had hurried to his side in almost crazy scare, and about his apartment waited two royal ladies. In one of the ante-rooms of the suite sat old Mason, stricken to death, swaying his decrepit body from side to side.

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Half-hourly bulletins were issued by the royal physicians.

At one time during the first night, Hardy seems to have gone back in imagination to the period of his tortures, uttering fearful screams, and exhibiting signs of the most abject terror. But towards morning, he became calmer under the influence of opiates.

About noon, Miss Jay's hand being then firmly gripped in his, he said quite coolly:

"A good strong coffin made of Harveyed nickel steel, dropped into the middle of the Channel. . . ."

And there stopped. Nor spoke again till some three hours afterwards, when, lifting up his right arm, he cried in a loud voice:

"By the Lord, I warn you, Yen How!"

After this the delirium appeared to leave him. He sank into a quiet sleep which, however, was made ominous by a throat rattle, and the veinous transparency of his far-sunken eye-lids.

The nation waited on in a bitterness of suspense, humbling itself before the Almighty in anguished prayer for his life, *but* for his life.

But at seven in the evening the end came. Hardy suddenly woke from his feeble slumber, jerked his body upright on the bed, and as it in answer to some official summons, screamed a sharp "*Here!*" and gasped, and died.

His Calvary was not heroic—without "vigour and rigour."

That the great man of England should perish by the hand of an impossible, very-foreign professional duellist, here was the very irony of Destiny. But so it was.

CHAPTER XXXV.

The Black Spot.

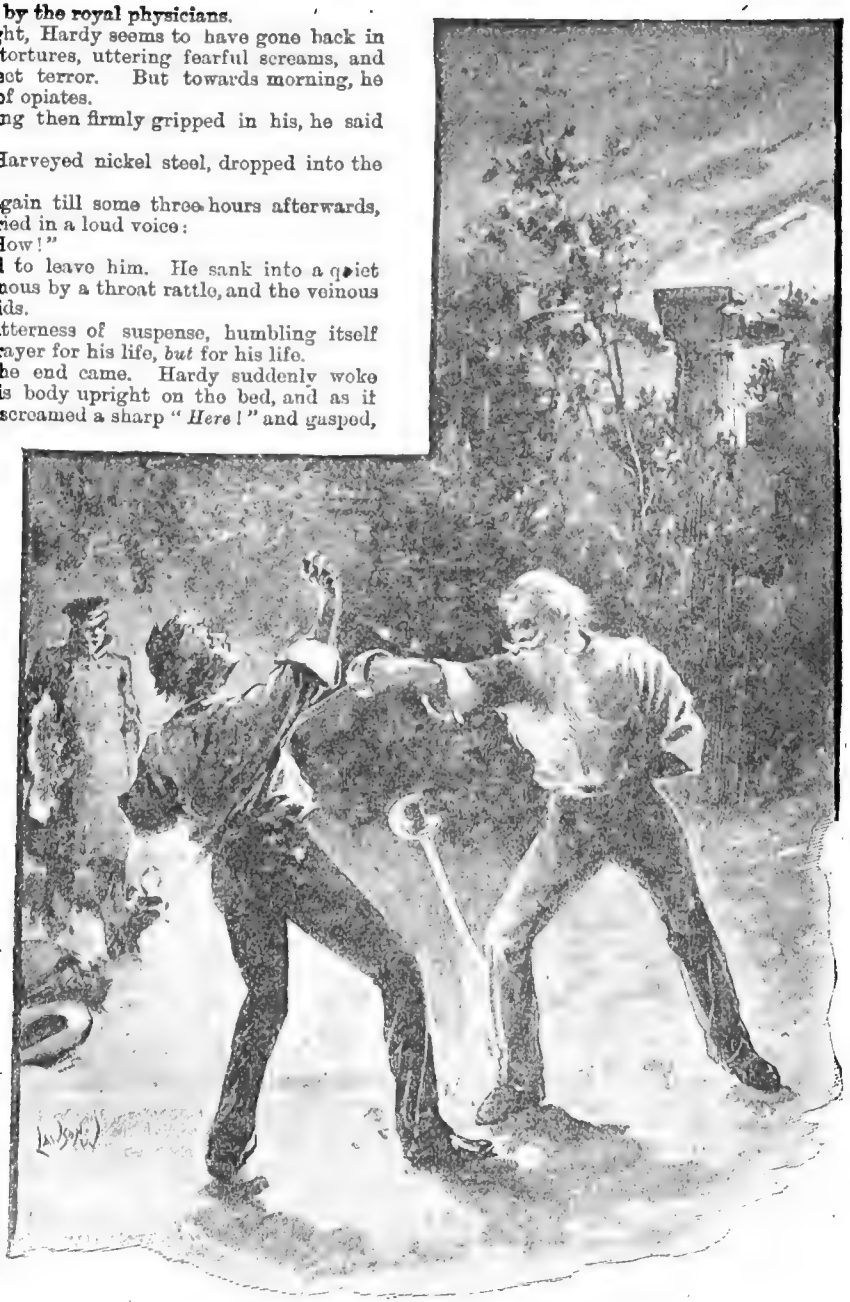
With the death of Hardy the detail of our chronicle must end.

The results of his malignest act of enmity against the yellow race—results far surpassing in horror and vastness those of any of his other acts—he did not live to witness.

It is certain that he could never have expected so wide-spread a result from the distribution of the injected Chinamen about the European coasts, for the simple reason that he did not know of Yen How's inauguration of the Yellow Gods at Paris, which inauguration was the chief cause of the universality on the Continent of the new Black Death.

As soon as an idol-less Chinaman was griped by the malady, or even saw the black spot on a neighbour's cheek, his first instinct was to rush toward the one place of hope—the temple at Paris. And as he rushed, he went spreading far and wide that winged plague, that more putrid Cholera, dissipating it among thousands, who in their turn rushed to infect wide millions.

So within three weeks perished, it is said, a hundred and fifty millions. Europe was a rotting charnel-house.



The steel of Edrapol is in Hardy's bosom.

But in three months the plague was over; and still England found herself confronted with the long, and sometimes bloody, and always tedious, task of clearing out of Europe nearly a hundred million yellow men.

After all, John Hardy's idea of the extinction of the yellow man never came to pass. Hardy was wise, but Nature is wiser. The yellow man is in the *Scheme*.

But now this one appalling fact arose upon the consciousness of the British people: that the Continent of Europe was British territory. This meant that all Asia and Africa were British, too. And if Europe, Asia, and Africa, then, beyond doubt, America also; for no two Powers, one so vast and the other so comparatively small, could co-exist side by side without a formal or informal acknowledgment of the suzerainty of the greater by the smaller. The sceptre of Britain, therefore, stretched from pole to pole, and from the river to the ends of the earth.

How now would she comport herself, old England? Would her reign be mild, and golden, and millenial? Or harsh, and vulgar, and *triste*?

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Here now was the chance for the rather minor poets of the time to break into measured prophecy, and with a certain real authority, sing for the nation its august present, and define its future. And Mr. William Watson—the man-lyre—say Apollo's lyre, without Apollo—he sang:

Now declare me, my love, my dove,
The Temple you fore-see;
Its frame below, its dome above,
And the Fabric's Summary.

So the lover sitting at the feet of his inspired mistress; and the mistress:

And would you foreknow the seeming
Of the Frame they now shall found?
Like a palace of pearl in mid-air!
And rainbows embosom it round.

Like lambs that bedow the hillside,
Or the flocks of dew at morn:
So natural, various, virgin.
Like a King's Heir, tardy-born.

Like anything mild and pompous,
Like anything based and broad:
Like the ascent with which King Solomon
Went up to the House of the Lord.

Like the minuet's sphere-harmony,
So cultured, measured, gay;
Like the Voice of God in the Garden
When it walked in the Cool of the Day.

It is the Ergon of all the Ages,
And kin to all Works of Art;
It shall stand in the All-Museum
As Man's contributed part.

For Mr. John Davidson, on the other hand (risky Pegasus-rider, he, or say even Pegasus-Jockey, not unacquainted with falls), the throng and noise of martial things had charms, and out, at the spur of the war, he broke:

Already War's barytone
Breaks up the camp of them,
Weigh well the ramp of them,
Marching to Marathon,
World-quake the tramp of them!

And he insists:

Wide, wide is the song of it,
Battle-words, doubtings,
Allalahs, routings,
Mix in the throng of it,
Jericho shoutings. . . .

. . . . . .

But Ares, our man of war,
Flames o'er us unequal,
Not doubtful the sequel,
E'en now from the van of war
Rave rumours of triumph. . . .

But in the matter of prophecy, it was the poet, Mr. Francis Thompson—Miltonic, he, if not Milton, seeming sometimes to possess that rarest of all human faculties, the power of expressing an idea (or "thing-seen-by-the-mind") in fated words suggesting magic—he, in a single line, struck the chief motive of the future. For he says, slightly before the war:

I had in dreams an omen of the Year,
And many shapes foresaw, and divers woes;
In earth and sky was storm—till one clear sphere,
Calm as the moon, arose.

I saw processions; runnings to and fro;
One gasped his news, and died, arrived from far;
I heard disjointed trampings come and go,
And trumpets blown for war.

"The people have forgotten God," I said:
Frowns so superb, then war so huge, they showed:
The rocking nations, brazen-throated, dread,
Like Bulls of Bashan lowed.

. . . . . .

A sunset in the East, malign and drear;
Eclipses boding Change, and divers woes:
In earth and sky was night—till one clear sphere,
Calm as the moon, arose.

And one I saw who steered a boat of air,
A thing with helm complete, and valve, and sail:
He called: "To bring man nearer man I fare:
The gods up here—are well."

This prophesy of the *boat of air* was quite worthy of a seer: for that—successful aerial navigation—was, as it turned out, the big thing, the paramount *motif*, of the new century, utterly changing the relations of man with man, and, in fact, making Man a new creature.

When the journey from London to Pekin became a matter of a few hours, and a thing easy to each man, then Man, and each man, might be said, for the first time, to possess the earth.

The immediate result was the establishment, once and for all, of that sole basis of real national culture and of real individual refinement—Equality!

Upon the practical annihilation of one sort of space followed the annihilation of other sorts of space—of the space, for example, between you and me.

Equality! Victoria does not despise the Prince of Monaco. Both are independent sovereigns. The little prince does not kneel before the great queen: they are independent sovereigns. When all men were independent sovereigns, then came Culture, and the golden time.

A democracy of kings . . . . . or, at least, of gentlemen. . . .

The name of this democracy was—English?

The words France, Germany, Russia, persisted,—but only for postal convenience?

* * * * *

No, certainly, that would never do. England, no doubt *will*, in truth, absorb the world. The Loadstone is within us. But we must change. If the world is to become English, the English must first become worldly. We will not do as we are—we are in shockingly bad form!

Yet, here is a question: how came that epithet "*merry*" to be applied to our Vulgar-Roman England? *How came it?*

Is it not for this very reason—that all Man is embryo within us? Man the engineer, Man the conqueror, Man the ruler, Man the Puritan, Man the Greek?

The Greek phase, certainly, is in a state of embryonism "highly elementary"! Our Oxford professors do not crown their heads with vine-leaves—yet. The vine is not, in fact, an English plant. Yet lo! one hears already that it is being grown with success in Wales.

Wales—note the locality. Great England! In her is everything. In her is also—*the Celt*.

This is what John Hardy meant, when, writing from Paris, he said that all which they had there we should have, too, in time—and much more, much more. And Hardy was a lad likely to know.

England, indeed, is as old as France. But not so "precocious." Just as the French ladies *fade* sooner than the English, so France has become a modish old dowager, while England is yet a bouncing, crude, coarse-handed lass in her teens.

The centuries are not ended; the years of Destiny will unfold themselves.

On the whole, we here, looking up through the Night at the general drift of the stars, read for the earth a good Horoscope. We bet on Man. He is a right clever fellow—well-meaning—well-made. We lay our money on *him*—to our last copec, to our final obol, to our uttermost farthing—we bet it all on him!

His past is good—it is even brilliant. And somewhere within it there is a Secret, which at certain swift moments of insight, shocks, and dazzles, and electrifies the soul.

We, then, for our part, believe, and cry aloud, and prophesy. Out of the Eater shall come forth Meat, and out of the Strong shall come forth Sweetness.

"*The gods up here . . . . !*"

THE END.

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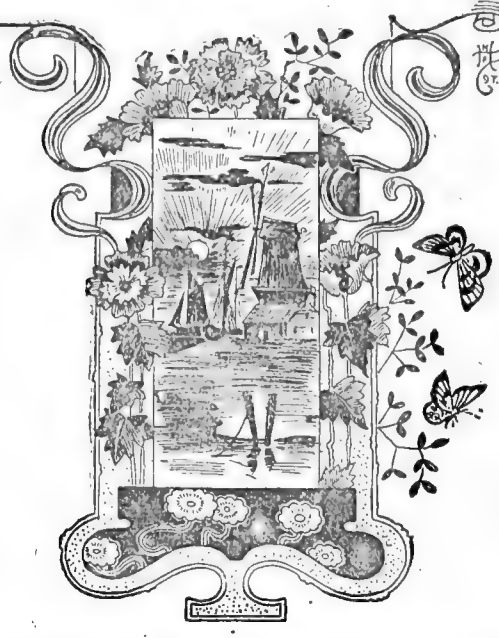
A Saint from the Sea.



There is a village on the Carribean Sea where the thatch huts and the palms seemed tilted away from the everlasting southwest wind. It straggles backwards over the loose sand from the sweeping beachline that is lost in either direction in hanging mists from the breakers.

A low sand-bar, held out by the river, affords a shelter in fine weather for the canoes; when it storms, the breakers wipe it out and roll back on the beach. On squally nights the sand swirls up the one street, and the whistling of the lashed trees is louder than the roar of the sea behind the houses.

On fine days the fleet of canoes comes sailing home at sunset, and the fish the women pile on the sand are many-coloured. When the weather is heavy from the north and the canoes are out there is anxiety as the black boats come racing home over the dark water, and in the house of Juan prayers are said incessantly.

There is ready help on the beach for those who come through the breakers, and the beacon fires are whipped and beaten down by the wind, giving weird flashes of light. Many a woman has paced the coast through the night in sorrow, waiting for dawn to show the brown body of a fisherman beached among the cold fish.

Nets and lines are stretched to dry in the warm sand between the houses and the line of canoes on the beach. Empty salt barrels litter the village, and drying-frames for the fish are built even to the edge of the forest.

One calm morning the canoes from this village were some ten miles out at sea. Fishing was slow, and the men lolled over the gunwales scarcely paying attention to their lines. Juan Renjifo's canoe had drifted out beyond the others, when Juan's sharp eyes saw wreckage floating on the water.

"There may be tackle or iron work to be had, so we'll run over and see," said Juan.

They found the deck-house of a schooner. It had evidently floated for some weeks, for the soft green sea-grass clung flat to the exposed sides as the wreckage rose and fell on the waves. Juan's men made fast and gathered several lengths of slippery rope, and began prying off rusty hinges and iron rings.

"Hello, what's that?" called the boy who had clambered on to the wreckage.

He was peeping down the companion-way into the still water within the battered walls. He reached in and slowly drew to the opening an object that held the attention of the men crowding behind him. It was the schooner's cabin door, and on the upper side was tacked a large picture. The paper was damp and seaweed grew to the door's edges. As it was drawn out into the sunlight the colours of the picture shone brightly, and through the masses of soft seaweed the men saw the outlines of a fair face and figure.

Interest in the ironwork was forgotten; rough hands brushed the grass from the floating door, and then they clearly saw the picture of a beautiful girl in a flowing, pale blue dress, her arms hanging at her sides. Her brown hair was tossed over her shoulders and the shadow of it was in her eyes. The bottom of the picture was torn away.

"Lift it out carefully," ordered Juan, "and set it in the canoe that the sun may dry it. Look at her! Jesu Nazareno! is she not beautiful!"

The canoe headed for home on the afternoon breeze. The sun dried the picture, and the men wondered who the woman might be and at the strange way it had come to them. Juan, as the captain of the canoe, referred to the find as his own, so forestalling any discussion as to the picture's place ashore.

In the village that evening interest in the haul was forgotten as the women crowded round the painting on the sand. They are a simple fisher people and superstitious, as are all men who follow the sea. As Juan's companions recited the circumstances of their discovery and heard the credulous comments of the women, they invested their find with the mystery and outer significance that had been growing in the mind of each of them during the run home. When Juan and another picked up the door the crowd followed quietly behind. Juan stood it up inside his hut, and there, in the light of flickering lamps, the people came in to admire the graceful form and the eyes and the soft colours.

"It looks like the pictures of the saints in the church at Vallalolid," said one.

The house became popular in the village, and its visitors grew. They envied Juan the possession of the thing, and the man first felt a pride in owning an object

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so popular, then a certain inexplicable allegiance to the eyes that looked out from the shadows of the hair.

* * * * *

Since three in the afternoon Winslow's horse had followed the road that led through the low forest behind the beach. Occasionally he had glimpses of the sea and the murmur of the surf was always in his ears. These tropical lands had a fascination for the Britisher, who spent months wandering from village to village among these sad-eyed, indolent and mysterious people, speculating as to their origin, interested in their ways and minds, and in a vagabondage that satisfied his restlessness. In such a mood he drew near, in search of a bed, to the village on the sands. He unsaddled his horse before the priest's door and the tired animal turned with a contented sigh to his fodder.

Later in the evening, as Winslow walked through the village, he came to Juan's house. His attention was attracted to the picture through the window, and on Juan's invitation he walked in. He laughed as he recognised the familiar poster and recalled the hoardings where he had last seen it.

"How did you people ever get that down here?" asked Winslow.

"It came to us from the sea," said Juan, and he recited the finding.

Winslow listened and understood how the cook, maybe, of some trading schooner had tacked this bright thing to his cabin door; but he knew nothing of the strange, almost religious hold it had already gained in the hearts of these fishing people. He laughed again.

"It's a small world, after all; think of that girl stuck up down in this hut," Winslow spoke in Spanish, and turned away.

"Why—you—do you—know her?" gasped Juan.

"Know her? Why, yes; it's a picture of Marie—what would you call it in Spanish?—Tempest; yes, that's it, Maria de la Tempestad."

Then Winslow turned and walked away, and only the eyes of the picture saw Juan fall on his knees and raise his hands.

Maria de la Tempestad! It was all clear to him now. From the sea she had been sent to help and comfort them. Maria de la Tempestad!—the patron saint of sailors, sent to watch over and guide them, to hear their prayers, to brighten their lives with her sweet mercies.

That night the first candle burnt on the new altar.

Juan related what he had learnt from Winslow. It only confirmed the dim belief of many of the people, and his story was accepted with a fervent joy in their good fortune. The picture was raised high on the wall, and a table before it held the dripping candles. The village girls brought flowers each morning and hung them over the old schooner's door. That room in Juan's house was given over to the new saint, for women came often to pray. Her blessing was asked as the canoes started in the morning, and thanks were given for her bounty when the fish were piled on the beach at dark.

There soon came a night when a fierce wind blew the canoes homeward over the waters. Then the women prayed long to Mary of the Tempest, while the men worked on the beach. Pedro's canoe did not come in, and Pedro's Tulita, in company with Dolores, whose man, Alejandro, worked with Pedro, knelt before the shrine and prayed—prayed until Pedro and Alejandro staggered into the light of the fires, exhausted from a battle with the surf far down the beach. Then ex-voto offerings appeared on the little altar—trinkets sold by Italian pedlars, cheap, tawdry and pitiful—but th cherished possession of some simple girl—or maybe a long strand of straight black hair.

So Maria de la Tempestad was enshrined and the church was neglected. The priest argued in vain. Was she not their saint, sent to them from the same sea that had brought sorrows to them all? they answered. Had she not saved Tulita's Pedro and Dolores's Alejandro?

What she had done for them was sufficient for them: their faith could not be shaken. From the shrine where they had placed her, by the mystery of her coming, by the look of her tender eyes, she ruled them and filled their lives. Men and women from neighbouring villages came to see and envied, just as the villagers themselves had in the beginning envied Juan that which was now regarded as a common good.

* * * * *

A little steamer puffed evenly over the green waves towards this village. The captain had decided to run in here for water and to pass the night should the weather threaten. A striped awning was over the upper deck, and beneath it and in the little cabin reclined the passengers. Forest, the company's advance agent, had brought about this sea trip to vary the heated journeys of the International Variety Company, of London, now touring in America.

With his customary push and knowledge of the country, he had arranged this sea trip instead of the hard overland journey to La Vela, where they were to open Sunday night. That was Foster's way of putting it. The captain smiled as he listened.

The company had played to good houses since arriving, but travelling expenses were heavy, and at the last town some properties had been shipped by mistake to Brazil, and Schaefer, the proprietor, and his son were complaining of business. They were inclined to blame Forest for losing the properties, and the company saw signs of a payday with no pay.

Becker, the stage manager, maligned the country to the good-natured captain; the soubrette talked at the engine-room door with the red-faced English machinist who passed as engineer.

The Japs, on the bills as trapeze performers, sat contentedly and quietly at the stern. La Cigale discussed the recent robbery of her trunk and the £15 she had lost thereby. Thus the afternoon, cooled perceptibly by the sea breeze, wore on, and the steamer headed in for the clearing in the green coast line that marked the huts.

The change in the boat's course aroused the women to a curiosity as to whether they were to spend the night at sea. The steamer swung in behind the headland that gave the village its so-called port. Interest in the picturesque houses and the dark people grouped on the sand beyond the quick reaches of the crumbling waves drew the minds of the soubrette and the dancer from their unanswered questions. They were seeing for the first time some of the beauty of the shores, and it attracted them. The steamer dropped anchor, and the soubrette climbed noisily into the first canoe that approached.

"Take me ashore, you niggers; I want to see your town. You ought to wear more clothes. They'd look at you in Bond Street dressed like that. Come on, Cigale, I'll help you in; come on, Becker, you can stand us beer. Have you got any beer ashore? Cerveza? Cerveza? I must have it."

Becker and the others tumbled clumsily into the big

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dug-out, while the natives steadied the canoe in silence and marvelled at the strange behaviour.

The strangers jumped ashore the moment the wave ran out and started toward the village, bent on reading its novelty. The soubrette tripped in her loose wrapper and the sand filled her unbuttoned shoes. Her hair was dishevelled and of two colours, for the dye worked out slowly.

At the door of the first house stood a native woman clad in a clean, simple dress of the country. She smiled pleasantly as the girl came along, and the soubrette entered her house. Once inside, she ran inquisitively at each object that drew her attention; she laughed at the low chairs, chattered away in English and made fun of the scanty furniture and household comforts.

Meantime the Indian smiled pleasantly. Unbidden, the soubrette passed into a second room and stumbling over a sleeping child, upset a gourd of freshly washed corn.

Then the Indian woman's face set a little and the smile left it—and the soubrette thought of her beer.

"Cerveza? Cerveza?" she asked.

The woman misunderstood, and pointing toward the door, answered:

"Si."

Becker and the others were passing.

"Come on, Becker, they've got beer in here, and she's going to treat——"

But the woman's dark arm barred the way as the others approached, so the girl left the house and followed them up the street, stumbling over her dress in the sand. Smiling men and women stood in doorways as they passed, and gravely offered them seats when they entered. But the visits were short, and like a gust of disordering wind in the neat houses. Becker trailed in the rear, dragging his coat and pulling up his trousers.

As the two came back down the street, the faces in the doorways were dark and forbidding, and behind the older people crowded children, watching the strangers with round eyes. In front of the church Becker and the soubrette met the rest of the party.

"I say, this village will have to do," began the girl, "I'm going to stay here all night—I'm not going to sleep in that little steamer——"

"Ugh!" said La Cigale, "vere will you sleep? Ze peegs walk zemselves into ze rooms, and zere are no beds."

"That's all right, they sleep in hammocks; I'll sleep anywhere. I've got friends all over the town. Becker and I have visited every family here. We'll give a show to-night—there's about ten shillings in the town, I guess. Mr. Forest, you're slow, you ought to have billed this place three days ago, and——"

The bedraggled girl broke off upon catching sight of young Schaefer, approaching with a roll of paper under his arm.

"Hello, Paul, what have you got? My posters, I declare. Let me have one. Are we going to play this town?"

"I've only got one, and it's for the Custom-house man; the captain said to give him one, it would please him——"

"Let me have it, I want it," interrupted the girl; "you can get another. I'm going to bill the town—go on—let me have it; you know you bought the whole lot cheap from the dealer's; it's the first time I ever travelled under anyone else's poster, but these niggers don't know the difference."

She pulled the paper from under Schaefer's arm and ran back to the church wall. She clambered up on an empty barrel that stood there and unrolled the poster to the view of the whole street. She fastened its top between two palm boards. There was the fair figure in flowing pale blue dress, and the serene eyes that looked out from under the shadow of rippling brown hair. "*Esta noche á las ocho*" ("To-night at 8 o'clock") was printed across the bottom in black letters.

A crowd gathered quickly, but it was a sullen and silent one, and the soubrette went on:

"*Esta noche á las ocho*—come and see me—Cerveza? No, *para mi* champagne," and from the unsteady barrel she raised one foot coquettishly.

A tall Indian had gripped Becker by the shoulder and was talking earnestly; the crowd grew, with never a word spoken.

"What's he saying, Jim; you know his talk?"

"He says is that picture of you."

"Yes; tell him yes. *Yo, mi—si, si. Esta noche á las ocho,*"—and again the soubrette tried to kick from the barrel.

An excited murmur broke from the crowd, and women raised threatening hands.

"*Si, si*—that's me—*esta noche,*" but that was all. The barrel swayed and Becker caught the girl as she fell. They were quickly surrounded by the outraged villagers, and as the company hurried towards the canoe that had brought them ashore the natives surged round them.

Luckily there were no stones to hand, but they threw what they could. The girl, now in mortal terror, was pale and fainting. She put her arms over her head and stumbled blindly toward the beach. The women tore her clothes from her back. She fell into the canoe bleeding and bewildered. In disorder they pushed off, and Becker's clumsy efforts with the paddle half filled the boat in the breakers.

* * * * *

That night many candles burnt upon the altar in the house of Juan.

THE MARINER.

M. A. P.

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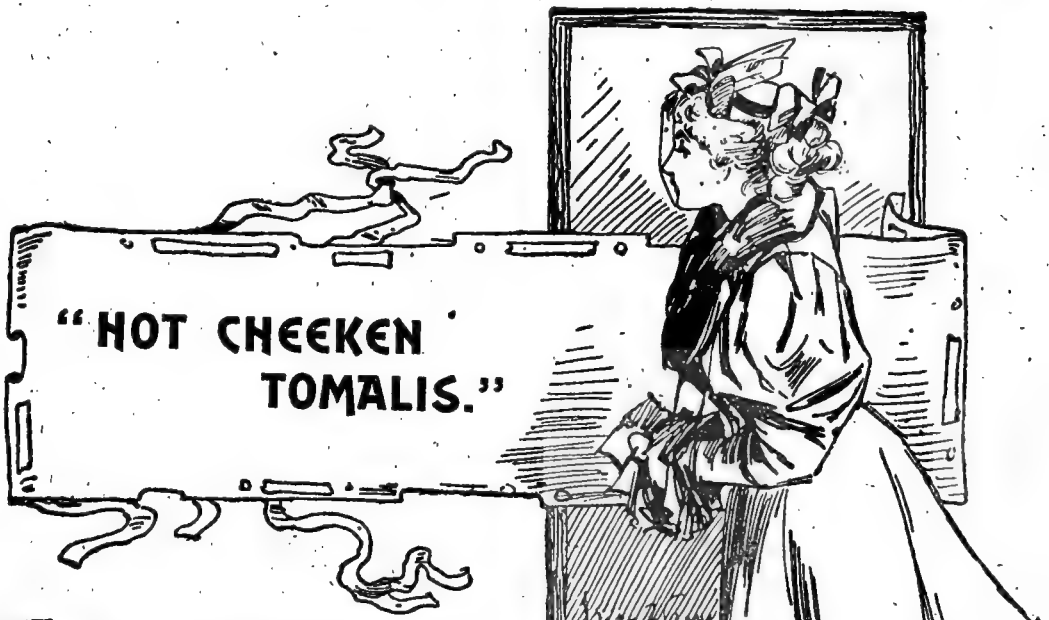

A BRILLIANT sunrise, a tomali stall, a handsome brunette tomali seller, and a savoury smell.

Those were the four things which Cyril Delzan noticed on the Plazadel San Antonio, Vera Cruz, one summer's morn.

Details at their best, perhaps, yet details which struck Cyril forcibly. The sunrise put him in a good temper, the tomali stall and its savoury ware put him in even a better, while the brunette—— But there! Cyril Delzan was impressionable.

He hesitated irresolutely in the middle of the almost deserted plaza. Should he, Cyril argued, return to the hotel for his breakfast, or stop and take a stay in the shape of a tomali? He sighed, stepped forward, stopped dead, then glanced lingeringly at the stall.

An arch smile, which displayed a brilliant row of small white teeth, coupled with the dimpled cheeks of the tomali maiden, decided Cyril. He retraced his steps, and advanced to the stall.

"*Buenos dias, señora, uno tomali, uno tomali.* Oh, blow! it's if you please, in English! Ingles, if you please!"

The Vera Cruzan maiden smiled again in reply to the lucid explanation and to the upraised sombrero.

Cyril glanced at the tomalis before him, then bending, sniffed suspiciously at the appetising odour, which issued from their tops.

"'Ot tomalis, señor, 'ot cheeken tomalis." More smiles and encouraging nods.

Cyril leant on the stall and commenced to eat.

"So you speak Ingles," he remarked between his mouthfuls. "Fine tongue—*bella lingua, Ingles! Bella*, than—than tomalis."

Another smile, very marked this time; evidently she understood him. "Very glad you and I can talk—hold a conversazione. Not a Dorcas meeting, is it? What is your name, *bella donna*? Deadly nightshade, eh? The everlasting Juanita, I suppose; eh, *bella persona?*"

Another arch smile. She had evidently comprehended the last two words of his speech.

He waited a moment for a reply. Receiving none, he took another bite out of his tomali, then pointing at her with his index finger said questioningly:

"Juanita?"

"*Ni! Ni!*" she replied brightly, catching the gist of what he meant. "Name? Angelinita!"

"Great Scott! Thanks, *gracias señora!*" he replied cheerily, emphasising his remark by dropping his pie, which rolled away merrily underneath the stall.

"Anozzer tomali?" she queried archly, holding one up in her taper fingers. "*Ozzer mato!*"

Cyril glanced at the pie which was being rapidly hidden from view in the mouth of a dog, then took the proffered eatable.

"You make them yourself?" he queried.

"Pedro."

"Sharp boy, Pedro! Well, adieu señora, *adios! buena ventura!* I don't know what it is, but that's all one. See you to-morrow," he cried, as, flinging the tomalis to the expectant dog, he paid the twelve centavos due for the tomalis and held out his hand.

Unhesitatingly she placed her slim one in his, which he impulsively raised to his lips. He gazed at it for a few seconds, marvelling at its beautiful shape, then glancing at the merry eyes before him, ever dancing with a latent mirth, he dropped the hand suddenly, and laughing merrily, started blithely on his way across the sunlit plaza.

Cyril Delzan was in love!

* * * * *

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Twenty-eight days had passed since Cyril had first met Angelinita, and eight-and-twenty times had Delzan met the tomalis girl.

"*Si*, señorita," he exclaimed, taking the usual tomali from her stall, at the customary hour, 7.30 a.m. "This is eight and twentieth tomali I have eaten. *Sabe, bella Angelinita*, why I regularly eat them?"

"You's hungry, p'raps, Cyril!" she remarked archly, her cheeks radiant with dimples.

"*Ni, ni*! It's to see you, *mia bella querida*!"

A rippling laugh answered this enamoured declaration. Cyril felt small.

"Angelinita!" he exclaimed seriously, leaning his elbows on the stall. "I have taught you English, to make you able to understand how I love you. *Carisima*, you understand what I say?"

The pretty dark-eyed maiden was listening very intently, she dropped her long lashes modestly, glanced coyly at him from under them, then folding her hands together, waited.

"Hot chicken tomalis are very good," Cyril remarked with judicial gravity, "yet they may ultimately pall on the palate! Now, you see, *mia querida*, you could never do that. I have lots of reals, I am not a hopeless idiot, so don't you think you might take me in hand for the rest of your life, eh?"

"You would ver troublesome be," she remarked, pouting charmingly.

"No, I shouldn't be particularly obnoxious, I assure you," he replied genially. "I should be awfully good. I say, you have forgotten the pepper in these tomalis this morning. Angelinita, will you be my wife? And become an Inglesa señora? 'Pon honour, I have thousands of reals a year, I love you desperately, and all that sort of thing. You can have everything you wish for, and ——"

"Cyril, I do not vant your reals!" she interrupted tearfully.

"That means you won't have me, I suppose," he muttered gloomily. "Well, all right, it's vilely rough on me. I thought you might have loved me for my cash, then I could have had you always beside me! Well! well!" he exclaimed desperately. "I never had any luck, so why should I expect it now—— ?"

"Cyril!" she whispered gently, leaning over the stall till her soft cheek brushed against his, "I loff you vor you, *carisima*!"

"Angelinita!"

"Cyril!"

"*Mia carisima!*" murmured Cyril, stealing a hurried kiss, as he slipped over her taper finger a ring of brilliants. "Keep that till I replace it by a simpler one! But one which to me will be far more valuable."

The Vera Cruzan's English was limited as before stated, yet by stringing together the words she understood, she managed to get the gist of what he said. Twenty-eight days' tuition and cuteness had wonderfully improved her knowledge of the tricky language of Albion.

"Oh, it is lofely!" she murmured softly, gazing wonderingly at the ring flashing its prismatic rays angrily round. "Jus' lofely!"

"Not one bit as lofely as you, *carisima*."

"Bah! y'say zat cause 'oo love me, Cyril," she replied, blushing, as, taking off the ring, she placed it in her bosom. "*Adios*, Cyril—here, come, man, eat tomali. *Adios*, till morrow." She blew a kiss airily to him.

"*Adios*, then," he cried gaily. "Hang the man who wants to eat tomalis!"

"Tomali no sell then!" she replied archly, waving her hand to him.

He laughed gaily, then turned to walk to his hotel.

On his arrival there he found two letters awaiting him; one from his solicitors, the other from his step-mother, Lady Delzan. The letter from the former was cold and formal, and ran as follows:

SIR,

Richard Wingate, Earl of Rosolyn, being deceased, and leaving no heir, you, we believe, have inherited the title and estate belonging to the same. We respectfully urge an immediate return to England.

Yours obediently,
KNOX, BACON & BACON.

His step-mother's was equally as cold:

DEAR CYRIL,—I think it about time you returned to Delzan Towers. Loitering in Vera Cruz will not improve you, so kindly return to 40 Park Lane, at the beginning of the season. Of course you have not forgotten Queenie Somerset or my wishes on the subject—wishes, I may add, it will be unwise on your part to thwart.

Sincerely yours,
CHARLOTTE, LADY DELZAN.

"Charlotte, Lady Delzan," he muttered mechanically, applying a lighted vesta to the corner of the letter. "'Wishes it will be unwise on your part to thwart!' By Jove, if I do, I am penniless! What induced my pater to put that infernal clause in his will is beyond my ken. Queenie Somerset—estimable, no doubt—yet unappropriate! Great Scott! What am I to do about Angelinita? Lady Delzan's back will be up when she knows that the maiden of my choice is only a tomali girl!"

It was six in the evening before he came to a resolution as to what he would do. Seating himself at the table he penned a short note to Angelinita, then taking out his cheque-book he wrote a cheque.

"It's a caddish thing to do," he muttered hoarsely, "yet what can I do? Stay! I'd better not the cheque, I'll put in notes."

The mistake was soon remedied, and he rang a hand bell.

"Carloo!" Cyril exclaimed as a boy answered his summons, "take this to that address, and send the padrone here. I wish to pay my bill."

Carloo bowed and made his exit to give the order preparatory to taking Cyril's letter.

Angelinita received the note an hour later, and opening it in the fast fading light, read the following with rapidly blanching features:

CARO MIO,—By the time you have received this, I shall have left Vera Cruz and all it holds dear behind me. I have just received a letter from my *madre*, who desires me to marry my cousin. A refusal means ruin. Angel, forget and forgive me! I shall never forget you—I never shall, as Heaven is my witness! I dare ask the same of you? Inclosed you

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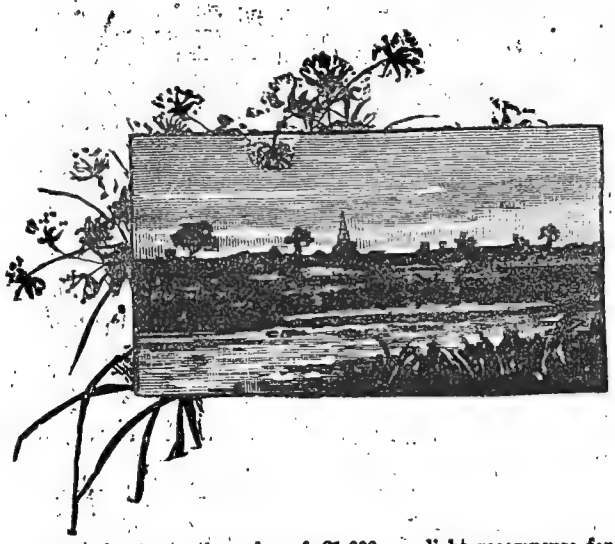

will find notes to the value of £1,000—a slight recompense for those twenty-eight days of bliss I have spent with you; days, alas, which have wrecked my future life, as they have blighted my happiness! Angel, *adios* for ever! It is useless for you to search for me, but if at any time you are in monetary distress go to Senor Nozes.

Yours in memory till death,
CYRIL DELZAN.

The letter fluttered unheeded to the ground, the notes lying crushed in her nerveless hands, which were pressed in agony against her heaving bosom.

"Cyreel! Cyreel!" she muttered hoarsely. "Did oo tink reals could make me forget? Though I *am* but a tomali girl!"

Then sinking on a stool, she buried her face in her hands, while dry, heavy sobs shook her slender frame.

Two hours later Pedro looked in the room. The pale moonlight shed its soft effulgence over all.

"Angel!" he cried. "Art here, *Caro*," then elevating his voice exclaimed, "*Carisima*, thy brother has come home."

Receiving no answer he entered the room, then uttered a cry, as he noticed the senseless figure of his sister stretched before him, one hand clutching a crumpled note, the other a ruby ring.

* * * * *

Lady Delzan was pleased with herself, decidedly so, for had not Cyril just returned with his wife from a honeymoon, which had lasted eighteen months?

"My dear Cyril," she exclaimed rapturously, the evening following his return, "Queenie looks positively charming to-night!"

"'Umph!" was the sociable rejoinder. "Glad you think so!"

"And she is so vivacious and pretty that she has captured the hearts of all the old bachelors."

"That's always her first exploit when she's at a dance. I wish one would capture her and execute a bolt."

"Cyril!"

"My dear mater-in-law—or, rather, step-mater—please don't look so horrified. You worry me." He smelt his carnation buttonhole.

"Cyril, did I hear you correctly?"

"Couldn't say I'm sure. I remarked that I wished some old Johnnie would execute a bolt with her!" Cyril said callously.

"You are decidedly flippant," remarked Lady Delzan stiffly. "Come to the ballroom, Cyril, the clock is just on the stroke of twelve—it is time for supper! Ah, the lancers just ended; how opportune. You will take the Marchioness of Russleton in. I reserved the supper for you with her."

"Awfully kind of you, but I wish you hadn't."

"Cyril, she's charming! Blonde and sweetly pretty——"

"I hate blonde dolls!" interrupted Cyril irritably. "My wife's blonde."

Lady Delzan ignored his last words; it was politic so to do, for she had no wish to rehearse the stormy scenes he had with her during the days preceding Cyril Delzan's marriage to the Honourable Queenie Somerset.

"Of course, if I had known that you preferred brunettes, I would have asked the Duchess of Bute if she would confer the honour of reserving the supper dance for you. She is a Mexican, and very pretty; they say all Mexican women are pretty."

The vision of Angelinita rose before him as he replied dreamily:

"Pretty? Some of them are infernally beautiful!"

"Cyril! very beautiful," corrected Lady Delzan, tapping him playfully with her fan. "She has taught me how to make a peculiar little pie. It is called a 'chicken tomali.'"

"Eh?" cried Cyril, starting violently. What a flood of sad, yet withal, tender memories these two words awakened within him!

"Chicken tomali," replied Lady Delzan, threading her way through the guests to the ball-room, followed by Cyril. "They are delicious."

Cyril lead his partner into supper, and obtained what she wanted, like one in a dream.

"Are you not going to eat anything yourself, Lord Rosolyn?" asked the Marchioness of Russleton.

"I don't know quite what to have," he replied, smiling at his partner.

"Señor, may I offer you a 'hot cheeken tomali'?" queried a gentle voice at his elbow.

He started. The voice was strangely familiar. Where had he heard it? In a Mexican Plaza. Where?

"Will you not take a 'hot cheeken tomali'?" she queried almost pleadingly.

"Angelinita," he whispered hoarsely.

"Cyril," she murmured gently.

"Angel," he whispered, taking a tomali, "I must see you for a moment. Are you disengaged for No. 20?"

"Yes," she answered hurriedly, "you can have it. I also must see *you*." Then turning to her partner she began to chatter vivaciously to him.

Cyril was like one in a dream till the band struck up the well-known strains of the "Dreamland" waltz; then he claimed the Duchess of Bute as his partner.

After a conventional turn he led Angelinita to the conservatory.

"Angel," he said hoarsely, "so we meet again."

"Yes, Cyril," she replied softly. "The wheel of fortune has indeed been kind to me—from a social standpoint. In love it has been cruel. I knew you would be here to-night, so I brought you a present which you once made me—£1,000," she said gently, taking the crisp notes from her bosom. "The compensation for a shattered dream of love. The ring I will keep, or, if you desire it, will purchase it. It is a monument, in miniature, of the worth of a man's pledge."

She glanced sadly at the rubies in the ring.

"Angel," he said hoarsely, "do not be hard on me.

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Do you think the wrench was nothing to me? What I have done I was forced to do. My life is a living purgatory. With you, your life is bliss. Bute is kind, I know ——"

"My husband died a year ago! just two years after we parted, Cyril!"

"Dead?" echoed Cyril, "and I never heard of it! And you are free!"

"Precisely!"

"And I—I am not!" hissed Cyril.

"If you were, it would not make the slightest difference to me," replied Angel coldly, yet withal affectionately. "Cyril, you spurned my love—true I was only a tomali girl—yet a tomali girl has a heart, and resents as much as the highest dame in the land such an insult—an insult may never be forgotten!"

"Angel, on my honour!"

"Cyril, it suits you badly to speak of honour to me! Here, take your notes; I did not need to have so great a sum. Of what count is a broken heart the more or less in this world?" she exclaimed bitterly, extending the notes.

"Take the money," he returned desperately, "and do what you like with it! I don't want it—burn it!"

"No," she replied, "I will keep it in case you die before me——"

"Well, what if I do?"

"I shall expend it on a wreath;" she smiled sadly. "Or if I die first, I shall leave it to you for the purchase of such like ornament! I may as well say good-bye for ever to-night, Cyril! I leave for Vera Cruz to-morrow!"

"Vera Cruz?"

"Yes!" she replied; then suddenly losing her fortitude, she flung her arms round his neck and sobbed: "Oh, Cyril, Cyril! How could you have served me as you did when I loved you so?"

"Angel, my darling, do not make me feel my character of a cad too much!" he cried desperately, kissing her forehead passionately. "Angel, I loved you once better than the whole world, and, Heaven forgive me, do so still!"

"Cyril, have you forgotten Lady Rosolyn?" The question was asked tremblingly.

"No, Angel! Before I married Queenie I told my step-mother I hated her. She laughed and reminded me of my father's will. I had to submit or else go penniless. Angel, forgive me! I know what I ought to have done, but poverty appalled me. To my shame be it said!"

"Cyril! Cyril! I understand," she replied brokenly. "But now, when our day dream is over, you must promise me one thing."

"Angel, you know that I would promise you a thousand."

A sad smile flickered for one moment across her beautiful face, then, looking steadily into his eyes, she said:

"Cyril, promise me now that you will do what I am about to ask you. On your honour."

"I promise faithfully on my honour, as a peer of England, to do what you ask, so help me Heaven!"

"You must forget me, as if I never existed—and though it breaks my heart to say it, you must never think of me again."

"Angel, I cannot! I will not do this thing!"

"You gave me your word," she answered simply. "And I—I wish it to be kept."

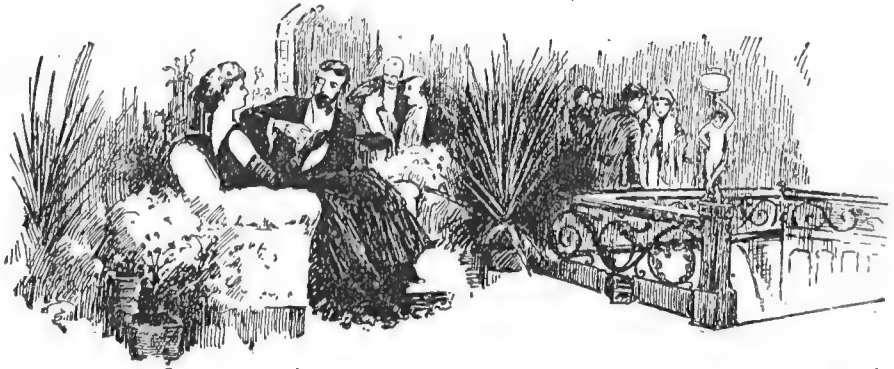
"So be it, Angel; it shall be kept." Then leading her to the ball-room, he stayed beside her moodily till she was claimed by a new partner.

One long, tender glance passed between them; then Cyril, with a stifled groan, passed out of the room and mounted the staircase.

Arrived in his bedroom, he opened a drawer in an escritoire, and, taking out a revolver, examined it and pulled the trigger as many times as there were chambers. It revolved perfectly. He slipped in two cartridges, revolved the chambers till the first loaded one was in position, then placed the barrel against his temple.

Below, the last bars of the final dance were dying away tremblingly on the heated atmosphere, when two sharp, loud reports hushed the buzz of conversation. A dread silence followed the ominous sound, for instinctively everyone realised that Death had visited No. 40 Park Lane.

TRISTAM MONKE.



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The Man Who was a Corpse.

I was two-and-twenty, broke, and on my way to some new mines in North Queensland, Yarroko being my objective point, but had got lost in the heavily-timbered country beyond Cobra. Neither sleep nor food had been mine for two days. When a man is worn out and his stomach is empty, standing under a big cedar tree watching the rain is not precisely entertaining.

It grew darker and darker; my spirits fell lower and lower; the night came. I was just prepared to advance an opinion that life was *not* worth living, when my weary eyes caught sight of a twinkle in the distance. Ten minutes after I was knocking at the door of a good-looking sample of a bush farmhouse. While waiting for admission I noticed that there was a substantial barn within fifty feet of the place.

At last the door was opened by a tall, dark, determined-looking, handsome woman, evidently under thirty, who desired to know my business.

I stated with some hesitancy that I was in search of food and shelter.

The woman looked at me, or, rather, *into* me, as though she suspected I had a much deeper motive in presenting myself. This did not lessen my embarrassment, and I was beginning to stammer out the circumstances that led to my plight when she made an emphatic movement to close the door.

"I am sorry to be an unwelcome guest," I said, preventing her, "but food and rest are absolutely necessary, and I do not propose going any further in search of them."

She seemed rather surprised at my audacity, but did not shut the door, merely contenting herself with the assurance of her inability to accommodate me.

I then offered to forego the meal if she would permit me to dry myself and sleep on the floor of her kitchen. She shook her head.

"May I sleep in your barn?" I pleaded, thinking this would be a guarantee that I had no design on her valuables. Again she shook her head and remarked that it was out of the question.

"Indeed," said I, turning quietly on my heel. "I am going to show you that it is not at all out of the question, and I shall remain in the barn till morning, when I will repay your hospitality by any little job you can suggest. Good-night."

I had gone about ten paces when she called me back, and stepping aside, so that the light from the entry would fall on my face, she stood looking at me as before.

"Well," said I, unabashed, "what is it?"

"It is this," said she. "I have a corpse in the house. My husband died this morning, and he is lying upstairs. I have just thought that you might be willing to sit up with him—I mean 'it'—for a while. I have an errand to do. If I drive, it will only take about two hours. Supposin' you're agreeable to keep the watch till I return, I'll give you supper and a bed!"

I was never timid or superstitious, but, had I been both, these inducements must have overcome my objections, such was my state of exhaustion. At my weird hostess's request I presently went to the barn, where I found a good horse and a country cart. Having harnessed the horse to the vehicle, I drove to the house and tied the horse at the door. I now entered, to find my supper ready, and was about to do justice to the fare when the woman, motioning me to follow her, led the way up a narrow staircase.

In a small, barely-furnished room, stretched on a single bed, lay the corpse—a man of about thirty-eight or forty, with a full beard and a heavy moustache. The woman showing no signs of emotion, I made no remark, nor did I think a reply necessary when, raising her finger towards the corpse, she said, in a casual tone: "He's been gone just ten hours."

We descended almost immediately. My hostess pointed to the supper, and then, hastily donning her cloak and hat, left the house. I heard her drive away, and it was with a queer feeling that I looked at my reflection in a cracked mirror that hung upon the wall.

"Well," I muttered, "this is a strange turn, to say the least." But now Nature began to assert herself once more, and, turning to the table, I sat down and gave my undivided attention to the supper.

I sat eating and drinking for some time, and listening to the patter of the rain outside. Presently I began to feel drowsy, and I fancy that I must really have dozed, for the sound seemed to change. It was like the creaking of footsteps on the stairs. I pulled myself up with a start, for I had every intention of earning my supper, and I had agreed to watch till the hostess returned. The more I listened the more distinct became the footsteps. They were certainly coming down the stairs. I thought I heard the door behind me open, and I turned my head.

The next moment I was powerless to speak or move, for there, standing in the doorway, with his finger on his lips to impose silence, stood—*the corpse*.

My heart seemed to stand still for a second; another, and I had vaulted over the table, and was vainly trying to unfasten the front door. In an instant the corpse was beside me, holding my arm with the grip of a man very much alive.

Having assured himself that I should make no further attempt to get away, the corpse motioned me to a seat, took a chair for himself, and then, in a voice scarcely as sepulchral as I expected to hear, requested to know how I came to be there, and what my business was. It was some minutes before I could steady my voice sufficiently to give the desired details, but at length the corpse (as I shall still call him) became satisfied of my harmless intentions, and then, as if he in turn owed me some sort of explanation, he proceeded as follows:

"I ain't altogether sartain as to the length of time I've

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laid up there," and he pointed to the ceiling, "but I've been under the influence for a considerable spell."

I suppose he saw that I wondered what kind of influence he had reference to, for he quickly added: "Drugs."

"Yes," he continued, in a meditative tone, "she must have been at it for months, off and on."

"Your wife?" I remarked, more for the sake of bringing him out of his reverie than because I was curious.

"Yes," and he nodded, as if what he was about to mention was a very common occurrence. "You see, it's like this. She's got her eye on another mate, a younger man than me, and much handsomer, too," this with an air of strict impartiality. "Yes, there's no denyin' it, much handsomer. Well, they've had their plans fixed for some time, and I s'pose they're in a hurry to get married. This'll account for the extra strong dose, and to think that it didn't take effect after all. She'll be awful disappointed." He shook his head as if he were truly sorry for his murderous spouse.

He now relapsed imto silence, and, turning to the supper table, began to ply a vigorous knife and fork. He ate rapidly as if in obedience to stern duty. He motioned me to join him, but I intimated that my hunger had been appeased, and I sat silently listening to the patter of the raindrops against the window pane.

Having finished his apparently unrelished meal, the corpse arose and produced a jar of tobacco and two pipes, one of which he handed to me. Together we puffed in silence, which was unbroken till the bowls were empty.

"I reckon they'll soon be getting back," was his first remark.

"They?" said I.

"Yes; she's gone after him and she'll bring him back with her to view the body. I guess I'd better be getting back upstairs. It'll take some time to lay myself out naturally. You don't mind being left, I suppose?"

"Not at all."

"Very well, then, just a word, and I'm going."

"You'll just sit here," continued the corpse, "until they get back, and you won't give no information concerning the company you've had. She'll probably ask if everything is all right, and you'll just give a nod, which'll mean that it *is*. I think," he went on, "that you remarked as you were a stranger in these parts."

I nodded.

"Well, you won't be detained beyond your original intentions, but you'd better not change your mind nor act in any way sudden."

I made no reply, and my companion slowly made his way up the narrow flight of stairs.

This noise overhead scarcely ceased when the sound of wheels became distinctly audible. A moment later and she entered the room, accompanied by a tall, robust-looking young fellow, who was laughing and chatting; indeed, they were both pretty merry. The drive had revived the lady's spirits to a wonderful extent.

"Everything all right?" she asked; and then, not waiting for a reply, she bade me go and put the horse up, when I should be shown my bed.

It was now about ten o'clock, as near as I could judge.

I rose to do the woman's bidding, and as I was untying the horse from the door-post, I saw, through the half-open door, my hostess and her companion preparing to ascend the stairs. The rain had ceased, and the stars were shining brightly. I led the horse within a few feet of the barn, when a strange impulse caused me to turn and look at the house.

I don't know what I expected to see, but at that moment two pistol-shots rang out loud and clear on the night air, and I stopped as if they had taken effect in my own body. Then I listened, scarcely daring to breathe; but there was not another sound—nothing to relieve the oppressive silence.

I stood as if in a dream, realising nothing until the horse gave a jerk, indicative of his desire for his stall. I took up the fallen reins and was about to follow, for the horse was now leading me, when a voice at my elbow said:

"You seem to be taking your time about putting that there horse up."

It was the corpse. Without more ado he took the reins from my hands, entered the barn, and, with my assistance, locked the stable and led the way back to the house.

Once inside, he motioned me to a chair beside the fire, and, after filling the pipes as before, he took the other chair, and smoked for over an hour in absolute silence. It must have been midnight when he arose and methodically mixed two glasses of whisky punch. He handed one to me and drank the other himself, this followed by another pipe and another seemingly interminable silence. At length he put away the whisky and tobacco, and began preparing a hot meal. He fried some slices of mutton with a delicacy and attention to detail worthy of a chef in love with his business. This done, he set the table afresh, and I, guessing what was expected of me, joined him in dispatching the eatables.

When he had carefully scraped up the remainder of the third slice, in order to relish the last crust, he cleared his throat, looked round with the satisfaction of one who is about to convey some pleasing intelligence, and said:

"Well, I popped them both off. Just a bullet apiece, and no waste. You see, owing to my position, I got a good drop on 'em."

I made no remark, and he added:

"Like to go and have a look at 'em? They're side by side on the single bed. It's a tight squeeze, but they won't be particular 'bout that."

I replied that I had no desire to see them. I fancy he was rather disappointed at this, for he eyed me suspiciously for a few moments, and then asked:

"Have you got any money?"

I replied in the negative.

"Well, here is some dust," and he handed me a small bag containing about £5 worth of gold. My first impulse was to decline his money, but I thought better of it as I caught the expression of his eyes

"You see," he began, as I pocketed the gold, "I've been sitting here all night wondering what kind of a disposition I should make of you. A man in my place don't want, naturally, to be the subject of discussion, and the best way to avoid it would be to send you along o' them," and he pointed to the ceiling. "But, on reflection, I think you can be trusted to keep mum, and I'd as soon let you go, so long as you get clean out of the country. It stands to reason that you can't get so clean out without funds as you can with 'em. Now my advice is that, having the necessary wherewithal, you go, before I repent of my decision."

I needed no further persuasion, and, notwithstanding the early hour (it was scarcely daylight), I departed with alacrity, and continued my tramp in the direction of Yarroko. Tired as I was, the walk refreshed my nerves, but my absorbing desire was to lie down and sleep, so I busied myself gathering materials to make a fire.

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These preparations concluded, I made myself as comfortable as circumstances would permit, beneath a large gum tree, and there to the sound of crackling brush, I fell into a blissful slumber. When I awoke it was afternoon, for the sun had already begun his descent. I arose, and remembering my destination, made haste to get over the remaining distance before night should again overtake me.

I had been tramping steadily for an hour or more when I heard the clatter of hoofs behind me. I had scarcely time to turn my head, when, to my amazement, the horse was reined up beside me, and the rider, with a cry to "halt," was covering me with his revolver. "A bushranger," thought I, quite prepared to hand over my gold-dust.

"What do you want?" I stammered, determined to show as bold a front as possible.

"I reckon I want you."

"What for?"

"Ain't you the man that stayed over night at a farm house, back yonder?"

"No," said I, with a presence of mind I could scarcely account for.

"Confound you! You must be the man. If you didn't stay there, where did you stay?"

"In coming along this road, I s'pose you noticed a camp fire under a gum. Well, that's where I stayed," I replied in quiet and measured tones.

"Where are you bound for?"

"Lamb Flats."

Here the rider lowered his revolver, and speaking more gently, said:

"You don't know me without my beard."

I looked into his face and started, as I recognised the corpse of last night.

"Pardn'r," said the man, dismounting, "I kinder repented after you'd gone, so I followed you with the idea of shutting your mouth, but I reckon you're all right and to be trusted. You may take my horse and here's ten pounds. Come, climb up, and having got off, don't stop till you've forgotten where you started from."

"I've got no use for the cash," I answered, "but I'm fond of horses."

The next moment I was in the saddle, and, with a dig of my heels in the horse's side, I was off at full speed.

* * * * *

Twenty years elapsed. I was a man of substance, and was visiting a small but very prosperous border town, representing a rich syndicate. My object was to purchase a very large tract of land necessary for the developing of mines thereby. We had secretly had experts there, and were tolerably certain there were valuable mineral deposits under the property we coveted. It was owned by the mayor of the city. Arriving at the depôt, a tall, fine looking man, white-haired but brawny, came towards me with:

"Are you Mr. Blank, by chance?"

"That's my name, sir."

"Well, I'm the mayor here. You come up to see me. Welcome"—holding out his hand. "To tell you the truth, we've come along in this town in great shape, all but the hotels, so, knowing you were coming, I ran down to say you'll have to come along to my house, where my wife'll make you comfortable."

I was delighted. He had a big, comfortable house, his wife, a bonny woman of forty, was very jolly. There was no style, but every comfort.

Several days elapsed. Our business did not progress We had settled the purchase money all right, but he insisted on royalties if minerals were found. I declared this was so remote a contingency it was not worth a clause, but he held out.

The fifth day after my arrival was a glorious one.

"Let's take a ride over the ground," suggested my host.

Off we went. We admired the scenery, the great trees, enjoyed the vivifying air, and left business alone. Presently he stopped the buggy.

"Hop out, Mr. Blank. I'll show you something."

I descended to terra firma. A short walk into dense timber, and we came across a clearing. I started.

"Somebody's been putting down a trial shaft!" said I.

"Just so," said my host, "and it didn't cost me anything either. Come along, and I'll show you where the men hid and lived while the work was going on."

I felt uncomfortable. Did he know that shaft was our work?

Soon we struck an old farmhouse, rough-looking but evidently weather-proof.

Following my host I walked into the living-room of the house. There was a table and a couple of chairs in the room. My host sat himself down in one; I, half mechanically, took the other. He did not say anything. I experienced the odd sensation one has sometimes of familiarity with a strange place.

"Mr. Blank, don't it strike you that we know each far too well to dicker about this royalty clause?"

"Know each other? Why, I never saw you in my life till a few days ago."

"The ingratitude of this world. Why, I've given you money, cooked your food; I even saved your life!"

"You have?" I jumped up, and peered into his face.

"I suppose I deserve shooting, but I'll be hanged if I've——"

"And I've done my best to stir your memory, too. Look round."

I did. That vague familiarity again.

"Don't the whisky and pipes even bring it back to you?"

It came like a flash. I darted across the room to a door. There should be stairs there. There were.

It was the corpse—of twenty years ago.

"Why, you," I gasped.

"I buried them both out yonder under the trees with my own hand. I recalled you by your voice twenty-four hours after you were under my roof; your voice is peculiar."

"Why, you are a murderer!"

"I've always considered myself my own executioner. If the neighbours had known what she did they'd have lynched her, and him, too. I was merciful."

His voice became vibrant, his expression changed. I recognised him then.

"That woman was starving and degraded. I made her my wife. She tried to murder me. I shot 'em. I was right. I'd do it again. I'm not as rough as I was, but my conscience has never pricked me. My secret's safe with you."

Becoming genial again he added: "Perhaps your syndicate would rather not do business with a man of my peculiar notions, but if they do that royalty clause will have to go in."

It did, quick; for, somehow, though I couldn't quite blame him, and though his home and family were perfectly charming, I wanted to get away.

Harry St. Maur.

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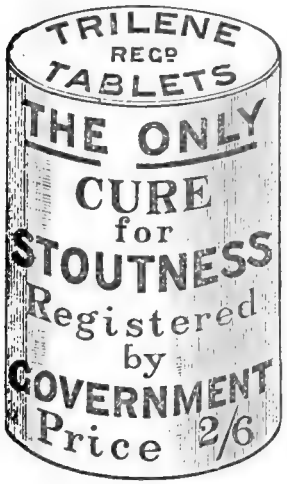

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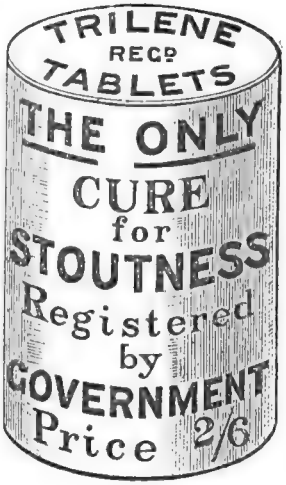

SAMPLES OF TESTIMONIALS.

"67 Alexandra Road, Norwich, October 19th, 1896.
"Gentlemen,—In reference to Trilene Tablets, I may say they have found the greatest possible benefit from the use of them; their action was rapid, and exceeded our utmost expectations, as they were also most beneficial to the respiratory organs. My wife was many years growing so stout, but although the disease was, I consider chronic, the Tablets soon reduced the same comfortably. You have our united thanks, and if I can do anything to promote your interests I will freely use my utmost endeavours to do so.
"Yours faithfully, J. R. CANHAM."

Convalescent Home, New Brighton, Cheshire.
Miss S. J. PRITCHARD says: "They have done me good. I am 2lb. lighter already."

23 Windsor Terrace, Penarth, Cardiff.
Miss M FLAVELL says: "I have lost 3st., and am much better in health."

Mrs. F. HARPER, 61 Portland Crescent, Leeds, writes: "My doctor persuaded me to try a box, and I find they have done my breathing a lot of good and I can get about much better. My doctor did not wish his name mentioned, but they have done him good personally."

A. BROWN, of 25 Edwin Street, High Pallion, Sunderland, says: "You have no idea what a most wonderful effect the Tablets had. I am a great deal thinner, and better in health."

Nurse CROUCHER, at Mrs. Bennett's, 14 Buckleigh Road, Streatham, says: "I lost 9lb. from the box I took."

"77 Hindhill Street, Heywood, February 8th, 1898.
"Gentlemen,—I have not quite finished the box of Tablets and am 2lb. lighter. The change is great, and several friends are beginning the treatment, which not only reduces fat but strengthens rheumatic joints—such has been the case with me.
"Yours sincerely, M. A. HEYWOOD."

Mrs. D. BURTON, of Silverleigh, Tunbridge, writes: "I am very pleased with difference in size, my friends all telling me how much thinner I am getting."

Windsor Hotel, Merthyr Vale, South Wales.
Mr. J. THOMAS writes: "When I started the Tablets I weighed 17st., and have got down to 14st. 9lb."

West Cornforth, Ferryhill.
Mr. WM. USHER says: "A sister of mine, who was 17st., was greatly reduced by your Tablets to 15st.

Extract from *The Lady*, September 3rd, 1896: "Many stout persons have suffered untold agonies in unavailing efforts to reduce their bulk, either by means of severe dieting, or by taking more or less deleterious drugs; but all these pains would have been saved if they had only invested in a box of the wonderful Trilene Tablets which are quite harmless, containing neither mercury, arsenic, nor any other mineral poison, and which are an unfailing cure for obesity.

FATHER T. M. BYRNE, of Holy Cross Abbey, Sligo, writes: "When I began your Tablets I was 12st. 5lb.; I now scale at 10st. 11lb.—my case, too, is hereditary."

L. LUDDINGTON, "Sunnyside," Station Road, Sidcup, says: "I have benefited greatly, and have lost a stone."

Mr. MCLEOD, 41, Calside, Paisley, writes: "I have been cured. If you want to know my weight now, it is 10st.; reduced 1st. 8lb., and I am quite content."

A. M. P. ACT, of Ongar House, Ongar, says: "My weight is so much reduced it is unnecessary to take more. The reduction of weight was from 12st. 6lb. to 10st. 4lb."

Miss A. ATKINS, 328 Southdown Road, Liverpool, writes: "I lost nearly a stone from taking one box."

Mrs. WHITEHOUSE, of Poplar Avenue, Edgbaston, writes: "My husband is in splendid health, and has lost 15lb. in weight since taking the Tablets; I am sure I thank you on his account."

Mrs. JAMES SMITH, of Cowell Terrace, Soham, says: "Your 2s. 6d. box of Tablets reduced my weight 12lb."

Mrs. WOODS, 447 Cowbridge Road, Canton, Cardiff, says: "Tablets have a most marked effect, and I shall take every opportunity to make known the wonders of your remedy."

Col.-Sergt. WHITTLE, of East Lancashire Regt., Burnley, Lancs, says: "A man in our regiment in 1891 lost several stone from taking your Tablets."

Mr. BUTLER, Surgeon, of Hampton Manor, Evesham, says: "My patient has lost 1st. in weight whilst taking your Tablets."

"Miss HUMPHREYS, of Claremont Buildings, Shrewsbury, has lost 1st. in weight already, and thinks the Tablets deserve every success."

Mrs. O'CONNOR, 2 Kensington Square Mansions, London, writes: "I am much less stout for taking them."

Surgeon Colonel E. S. BRANDER writes from Dhansi, India, in September, 1897: "Your Tablets in my own experience form an excellent remedy for reducing weight."

The Princess LIECHTENSTEIN writes from Landsberg, Austria: "Pray send me your excellent Tablets."

Mrs. WEAVER, of Greenpits Villa, Ross, Hereford, writes: "I am reduced from 13st. 8lb. to 11st. You may use this if you like."

Miss J. GUISE, 3 North End, Croydon, says: "I cannot speak too highly of the Tablets; I was stout all my life until a few weeks ago, when I first began your treatment. I was surprised to find they acted so admirably. I am now getting quite a slender figure, besides being better in health."

Balgowan Lodge, Methven, N.B.
Miss MCPHERSON writes: "I have taken a box, and am reduced 1st. in weight."

THE TRILENE ASSOCIATION, 66 FINSBURY PAVEMENT, LONDON.

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The Account of - - - - Maud's Holiday.

"Dear me! To think I have been a whole month away! Why, I can't realise it. Oh, I've had such a time! The most de—light—ful holiday I ever had. I wish I were going back again to-day! Aunt and Uncle are so awfully kind, you know. They would do anything for one, and—oh, do you know, I met the nicest young—but you won't tell, will you?"

"No, no, of course not."

"Well, I'll tell you how it was. You know Mr. Grundy, the lawyer, don't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, there's a young lawyer with him now, a Mr. Rosavear—Vincent Rosavear, his name is—pretty name, isn't it?"

"Very. And he's a lawyer, is he?"

"Why, yes; but let me tell you. The McManuses—you know the McManuses—they had a party—a big party—just a week after I came—oh, it was a lovely party, too! I enjoyed myself thoroughly at it. But really, you'd have laughed—I didn't know Vin—I mean, Mr. Rosavear, you know, or anything about him, never saw him or heard of him before; but just after the first dance Miss Harris came to me and said she had a friend who wished to have an introduction to me, and asked me if I had any objections. Well, of course, what could I do? I wasn't going to tell her if I objected to her friend; so I just said I should be pleased to meet him, and then she brought him over and introduced him—and that was how I met Vin—I mean Mr. Rosavear. Wasn't it peculiar?"

"Why—er—yes—that is, it was——"

"Yes, but to think of him asking for an introduction—you know, that's what amused me. Well, we had several dances together—a lovely dancer he is too—oh, he can waltz just to perfection. And then he is so distinguished looking! I noticed it when he was dancing with Miss Harris—just as straight and tall—he must be quite six feet, for I can stand easily under his arm, I know—well, let me see, what was I saying? Oh, yes—he escorted me home that night—I didn't care. I thought, of course, I would never see him again."

"And didn't you?"

"Didn't I! I should say I did! Why, he was up to uncle's almost every night while I was there—he is a friend of uncle's you know—oh, we used to go out riding and to parties, to the rink and the theatre and I don't know where. What did I care? I thought I would have a good time while I was there at all events. But, oh, we had such times too, at home. He's such a lovely singer, you know. How I used to enjoy just being in the drawing-room and hearing him sing! Dear! He has such stirring black eyes, too—long dark hair, and a big moustache—a lovely moustache—I wish you knew him—oh, wait, I'll show you his likeness."

"Oh, he gave you his photo, did he?"

"Why, yes, two of them—I accepted them. What did I need to care? I knew I'd never see him again. He wanted mine, but I refused to give him one; so then he made me promise him one when he comes to see—to—to I mean, when he comes next June——"

"What! Is he coming here next June?"

"So he said, but pshaw! He won't come, I know he won't. It was only in fun, you know——"

"Why, Maud, where did you get the ring?"

"Good gracious! You notice everything! Well, it was one night he happened to take hold of my hand——"

"Oh, Maud, you didn't surely——"

"No, indeed I didn't—I just jerked it away at once, and—and gave him a look—but in a few minutes more he said to me: 'Let me look at your hand, Maud—I mean Miss Finley,' and smiled so mischievously that I thought he was only in fun, and before I knew another thing he caught my hand and sque—and held it so tight I couldn't get away—he is so strong!—and before I knew, he had slipped this ring on my finger—isn't it pretty? I couldn't help it! But what did I need to care? I knew I would likely never see him again.

"Well, that was New Year's night. Next evening he came again, and it was so stormy we stayed in the house. Oh, it was lovely to sit there with him and look into the fire while the shadows were flickering about the room, and we talked and talked there for hours about people we had known, and about how we had lived and how we'd like to live for the future, and I don't know what all. But, by-and-bye, he turned to me and said: 'Doesn't the fire make one feel lonely?' and I said: 'Yes, it seems to give one such a strange, weird sort of feeling—I think I'll light the lamp, it will help to cheer you perhaps.' 'No, no,' he said, 'just let's sit here and talk. I'd like to know more about you, a great deal.' 'Would you really?' I said. I thought he was joking. Well, I didn't light the lamp, and it kept getting darker and darker in the room, and only a little flame flickering away there in the grate, and then he—he just—he just kissed me."

"Oh! Oh, Maud Finley!"

"Oh, I was angry! I tell you I showed him what a temper I had, but he just caught hold of my hands and—and pleaded so hard for me to forgive him, and seemed so sorry, that, when he said he was only joking and promised never to do so again, I forgave him, and we made it up again, and I asked him to forgive me for being angry with him, and—and promised to—to—to be——

"But the rest is a secret. I really must not tell it yet."

W. A. Robertson.

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EIFFEL TOWER LEMONADE

2 GALLONS FOR 4½D

It is incumbent upon every person who would remain in health, through the great and sudden varieties of weather peculiar to our country, to exercise a zealous watchfulness over the body and its functions to the end that they may always be in readiness to ward off illness. A prudent person will see the policy of taking constant precaution to maintain the blood at an even temperature and in a healthy condition. It is almost incredible to realize how very few people are conversant with the thirst-quenching and cooling properties of the lemon. The acid of the lemon is a natural acid, and eminently suitable to the human system. It cools the over-heated blood, allays feverishness, and keeps down eruptive tendencies. The juice of the lemon, therefore, forms one of the most valuable beverages for summer drinking. The Eiffel Tower Lemonade is lemon at its very best. Why? Because it is a concentration from the very finest lemons the world produces. Sicily is noted for its lemons, and it is here the fruit used in the Eiffel Tower Lemonade is grown. Only the choicest lemons are selected, and these undergo the first stages of concentration on the spot. The final stages of manufacture take place in Kent. Owing to the preliminary treatment received in Sicily the natural flavour and delicious aroma of the newly-gathered lemon is retained, and the result is a refreshing, healthful, wholesome, and natural lemonade, which allays thirst, and revives drooping energies. No undesirable chemicals are added, as is done in so many other cases. By using Eiffel Tower Lemonade you have a dainty fruit drink always on hand, so that friends dropping in for a friendly chat may be supplied with a refreshing draught that will be as welcome as the gentle shower or the cooling breeze. Remember, it only costs 4½d. for two gallons. Of all Grocers, or a sample will be sent free for six stamps, G. Foster Clark & Co., No. 115 Eiffel Tower Factory, Maidstone.

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The Best Hair Dye

in the World for Lashes, Eyebrows, and Hair on the Head, with Moustache and Beard. For Ladies' Hair and for all Colours. Had at 3s. 6d., post 3s. 9d., of ALEX. ROSS, 62 Theobald's Road, High Holborn, London, W.C. Spanish Cantharides for fallen hair, 3s. 6d. 5s. 6d. & 10s. 6d.

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SULPHOLINE LOTION,

For clearing the skin from Spots, Blemishes, Redness, Roughness, giving a Beautiful Complexion and pleasing appearance.

SHILLING BOTTLES.

The Lustre Lasts!
Pyr-Ka Leaves no Scratches!

Pyr-ka

The wonderful Metal Polisher. Cleans and burnishes gold, silver, plate, copper, brass, nickel, tin, glass, etc., better, quicker, and at less cost of labour and money than any other polish known.

Paste or tablets, 1d. to 6d. All dealers.

£20

Hairdressers fitted up. Estimates free.

Tobacconists Commencing. See Illd. Guide (259 pages) 3d. How to open a cigar store, £20 to £2,000 Tobacconists Outfitting Co., 186, Euston Road, London. The largest and original house (50 years reputation. Mgr., H. Myers

1,000 GOLD WATCHES FREE

1/-

To introduce our now celebrated Soap to 1,000 more readers of this paper, we have decided to give away 1,000 GOLD WATCHES ABSOLUTELY FREE OF COST. These Watches are REAL GOLD HALL-MARKED, and at retail would cost upwards of 5 GUINEAS. If you want one write to us without delay. With your letter send us 1s. P.O., for which we will send you a tablet of Dr. Garland's Facial Soap and our offer, on complying with which the Watch will be sent free by registered post. We have overwhelming testimony that our Facial Soap is the best ever offered to the British public, and our idea for giving away the Watches is that you may talk about us among your friends, and recommend our Soap wherever possible. Miss H. Hunt, Potbridge, Odiham, Hants, writes: "The gold watch arrived quite safe this morning. I am very pleased with it. Many thanks to you for sending it."

MAY, GARLAND & CO. (Dept. 112), Cheltenham House 15 MORTIMER ST., LONDON, W.

KEATING'S POWDER

DESTROYS BUGS FLEAS MOTHS BEETLES

TINS 3D 6D & 1S

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ON THE BEST AUTHORITY.

J. J. C.—Yes, the soldiers who guard the Bank of England during the night receive special pay for that duty. The subaltern receives one guinea, the sergeants half-a-crown, and the privates one shilling each.

N. G. A.—There are now only five Scottish regiments which wear the kilt. These are the Black Watch (Royal Highlanders, late 42nd and 73rd), Seaforth Highlanders (late 72nd and 78th), Gordon Highlanders (late 73rd and 92nd), Queen's Own Cameron Highlanders (late 79th), and the Argyle and Sutherland Highlanders (late 91st and 93rd).

DRIVER.—The right of permission to allow memorials to be admitted to Westminster Abbey lies with the Dean. The dimensions of the proposed memorial must be first submitted to the Chapter, and by this body is fixed the fee which ancient custom decrees should be paid. The site is then selected by the Dean. For a bust the cost is usually £200, or thereabouts.

C F. L.—The white rhinoceros has become nearly if not quite extinct. There are two stuffed specimens in England and one in the Capetown Museum.

BARONET.—The chief insignia of a baronet's coat of arms is derived from the "Red Hand" of the O'Neill family. It is said that in an early expedition to Ireland, it was given out that whoever first touched the shore, should possess the territory he touched. Seeing that another boat was likely to outstrip his, O'Neill cut off his left hand and threw it on the coast. The princes of Ulster were descended from this O'Neill, and the motto of the O'Neills to this day is "Red Hand of Erin." When James I. (in 1611) created 200 baronets in payment of £1,000 each, it was ostensibly for the amelioration of Ulster, and they were allowed to place the "open red hand" on their arms.

FIRE.—About 300 theatres have been destroyed by fire in Europe during the present century.

A. K.—Mr. R. E. Lawson of Stanhope Street, Blackfriars, originated binding in cloth. The first book bound in cloth was a volume of manuscript music. That was about 1823. Mr. Leighton was the first to stamp the cloth with gold titles; previously, printed labels were stuck on the cloth.

S. I.—There are about 100,000 islands, large and small, scattered about the oceans of the world. There are 5,500, at least, on the coasts of America.

SLANG.—Pierce Egan, the author of a book called "Life in London," and several other stories, was the first to introduce modern slang-writing. That was about sixty years ago. Slang is, of course, not at all a modern invention; it was known to the classic Greeks and Romans, and abounds in the works of Aristophanes, Terence, and others.

CAPUT.—The last person to suffer death in England by being beheaded was Simon Fraser (Lord Lovat). He was executed on Tower Hill on April 9th, 1747, for treachery.

SCHOOL.—The Greek youths may not have gone to college in the modern acceptation of the phrase. Their philosophers used to take a stand at some appointed place, and impart instruction to hundreds of young men who were eager to acquire it. There was the philosopher Zens, who taught in the porch (*stoa*), from which we get the word *stoic*. There were the groves of Academus, where the poetical pupils could wander about while receiving instruction. This is not "going to school," say some people. But the pupils went somewhere to be taught, which is really "going to school."

R. J.—You should apply to the Copyright Office, Stationers' Hall, London, E.C., if you wish to copyright a piece of music.

E. G.—There are seven ancient brooms in the Cairo Museum. These relics of olden times are made of straw and closely resemble the straw brooms in use at the present time.

D. W.—The Speaker derives his name from the fact that he is the spokesman of the House of Commons when addressing the Sovereign. You are wrong in supposing that the Speaker can never vote; when the votes recorded by each party are equal, he is entitled to a casting vote.

L. M.—The sign & is a ligature combining the letters *et* (Latin for *and*). In the old form (E) the letters can be seen, but the modern style is a corrupt form.

N. N.—If you see a man 328 yards off, he appears to you exactly one-third his proper height. At ninety-two yards further off he appears one-fourth his height, and at 109 yards still further, he appears one-fifth.

A. S. G.—There are about 4,050 postmen in the Metropolis, who cover an average of twelve miles a day.

CHARLIE.—If you want something inexpensive and easily procured to soften the water in which you wash, drop the peel of an orange into the jug overnight. This will soften the water, and turn it into a pleasant skin tonic.

T. T. asks: "Is it true that etiquette forbids judges and judicial officers to ride in an omnibus?"——Not in this country; but in France, where, if a judge does not own a private carriage, he must either take a cab or walk.

A. S. G.—France was the first of the European countries to grant civil rights to the Jews.

K. H.—Yes, the word "hairbreadth," now used for an infinitesimal space, was once a regular measure. It was the width of sixteen hairs laid side by side.

DICK.—Good champagne corks cost when new from threepence-halfpenny to fivepence apiece. They must be absolutely flawless, and are cut by hand from the best quality of Colonia bark.

W. W.—Yes, hunting is a very costly sport. It is estimated that £800 is the average cost of every day spent with the hounds.

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This Offer Will Not be Repeated.

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Lot 1.—4s. Lace Curtains for 1s. 11d. These beautiful Lace Curtains, containing about 6 yards in the pair, 48in. wide, shaded ground, taped edges, with handsome double borders. Undoubtedly the cheapest ever offered. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 5s. 6d. Satisfaction guaranteed. — **4s. Lace Curtains for 1s. 11d.**

7s. Lace Curtains for 3s. 11d. — Lot 2.—7s. Lace Curtains for 3s. 11d. per pair, measuring 3½yd. long, by 52in. wide, shaded ground, taped edges and handsome double borders; wash easily. 3 pairs for 11s. 3d. Money returned if not approved.

Lot 3.—Specially handsome Drawing-room Design, entirely new and most successful. In white or cream, with scolloped and taped edges, made from thoroughly sound cotton yarns; warranted to wear well. Sale price, 5s. 11d. per pair. Each Curtain measures 3½yd. long by 60in. wide. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 17s. Money returned if not approved. — **10s. 6d. Lace Curtains for 5s. 11d.**

Lot 7.—**10,000 Special Extra Quality, Heavy Loom Kitchen Table Cloths,** made from the heaviest and strongest Linen Yarns. Numerous artistic patterns. Specially recommended for hard wear. Warranted to give the best possible satisfaction, being very neat, inexpensive, and durable.
Size 54in. by 45in., price 1s. 2d. each, or 3 for 3s. 3d.
Size 56in. by 56in., price 1s. 5d. each, or 3 for 4s. 0d.
Size 62in. by 62in., price 1s. 11d. each, or 3 for 5s. 3d.
Size 68in. by 62in., price 2s. 2d. each, or 3 for 5s. 11d.

Lot 22.—10s. 6d. White Scotch Blankets for 5s. 9d. per pair, measuring about 56in. by 76in.; light, warm, and durable. Admittedly the cheapest blankets ever offered. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 15s. 6d. Satisfaction guaranteed or money returned. — **10s. 6d. White Scotch Blankets for 5s. 6d.**

25s. Special Heavy Blankets for 14s. 9d. — Lot 23.—25s. Special Heavy Witney Yorkshire Blankets for 14s. 9d., measuring 75in. by 96in. Manufactured entirely of pure long staple wool, bleached by the sun and beautifully white. Give endless wear, and are easily washed. For perfection of finish, durability, and economy, they are unequalled. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 42s. Money returned if not approved.

WITNEY BLANKETS.

EXCEPTIONAL VALUE.

Lot. 24.—800 pairs of best quality Witney Blankets, with fancy borders, very soft, warm, of great durability. Made from the best wool, and warranted to give every satisfaction. Prices given below are little more than half the original cost.

Size	Weight.	Price per Pair.	3 Pairs for
53in. by 70in.	4lb.	6s. 3d.	18s.
60in. by 80in.	6lb.	7s. 9d.	22s.
70in. by 90in.	8lb.	11s. 6d.	33s.
75in. by 96in.	9lb.	13s. 0s.	37s.
80in. by 99in.	10lb.	15s. 3d.	43s.
86in. by 104in.	11lb.	16s. 9d.	48s.

Lot 30.—9s. Bleached Twill Sheets for 4s. 11d., measuring 64in. by 84in. Made from the best cotton yarns, thoroughly shrunk, soft finish, and hemmed ready for use. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 14s. 3d. Satisfaction guaranteed. — **9s. Twilled Sheets for 4s. 11d.**

15s. 6d. Sheets for 7s. 11d. — Lot 31.—15s. 6d. Bleached Twill Sheets for 7s. 11d., measuring 90in. by 100in. Made from the best cotton yarns, thoroughly shrunk, soft, finish, and hemmed ready for use. Special Offer: 3 pairs for 22s. Money returned if not approved.

Lot 39.—1,500 yards of Best Quality Kidderminster Carpeting, 36 inches wide, at 1s. 11d. per yard; usual price 3s. 6d. per yard. Can be supplied in numerous handsome and effective designs and rich colourings to harmonise with all requirements. Impossible to repeat this offer. Money returned if not approved. — **3s. 6d. Best Quality Kidderminster Carpeting for 1s. 11d.**

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10,000 RUGS

GIVEN AWAY.

GUARANTEED GENUINE BARGAINS.

Lot 50.—**THIS PHENOMENAL OFFER** is made to the readers of *Short Stories* only. On receipt of Postal Order for **6s.**, or 74 stamps, we will forward DIRECT FROM OUR LOOMS to your address, one of our **10/6** genuine **SEAMLESS, WOVEN, REVERSIBLE CARPETS,** suitable for Drawing-room, Dining-room, Bedroom, etc., handsomely bordered and woven in 30 different patterns and art colourings to suit all requirements, and **large enough to cover any ordinary sized room.** These Carpets will be sold as an advertisement for the goods of the British Carpet Weaving Company BELOW THE ACTUAL COST OF PRODUCTION. They are made of material equal to wool, and, being a speciality of our own, can only be obtained Direct from our Looms, thus saving the Purchasers all Middle Profits.

GIVEN AWAY.—WITH EVERY CARPET WE SHALL ABSOLUTELY GIVE AWAY A VERY HANDSOME RUG TO MATCH; OR WE WILL SEND TWO CARPETS AND TWO RUGS FOR 10/6.

MONEY WILLINGLY RETURNED IF NOT APPROVED.

THOUSANDS of REPEAT ORDERS & UNSOLICITED TESTIMONIALS RECEIVED.

"SHORT STORIES" COUPON
On receipt of this Coupon and P.O.O. for amount we guarantee to send any goods as above.
THE BRITISH CARPET WEAVING CO.

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Lot 60. SIZES and PRICES. No.	ft. in.	ft. in.	Sale Price.	Former Price.
1	9 0 by	6 0	5/6	9/0
2	9 0 by	7 6	7/0	11/9
3	9 0 by	9 0	8/6	13/6
4	10 6 by	7 6	8/9	13/9
5	10 6 by	9 0	10/0	15/6
6	12 0 by	9 0	11/6	18/0

Lot 60. SIZES and PRICES. No.	ft. in.	ft. in.	Sale Price.	Former Price.
7	12 0 by	10 6	13/6	20/6
8	13 6 by	10 6	15/3	24/0
9	12 0 by	12 0	15/3	24/0
10	13 6 by	12 0	17/0	27/0
11	15 0 by	12 0	19/0	32/0
12	18 0 by	12 0	22/9	36/0

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THE BRITISH CARPET WEAVING COMPANY, Sale Dept., **31 OLD STREET, LONDON, E.C.**

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